

# CHINA TOURISM

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Changes of **Tibet**

**Southeast Guizhou**  
An Original Eco Tour

Story behind  
**Kaiping Watchtowers**

Climbing the  
**Mt. Changbai**



**315**

MAY/JUN 2008

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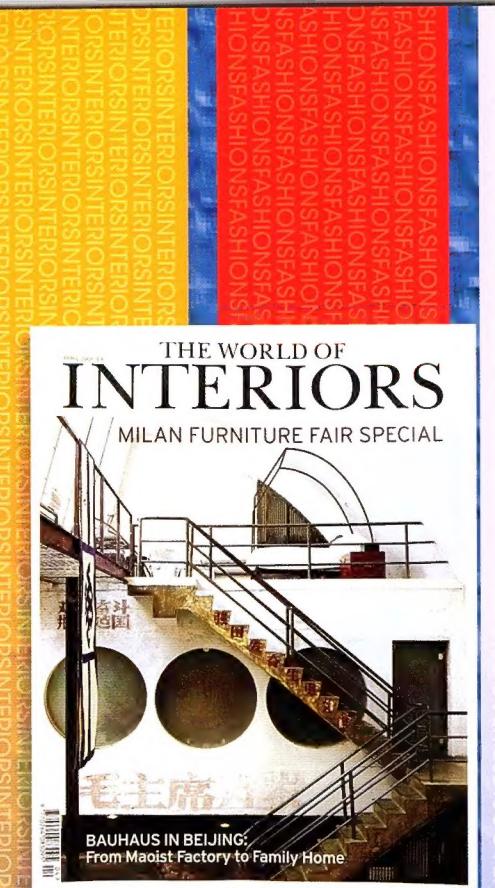
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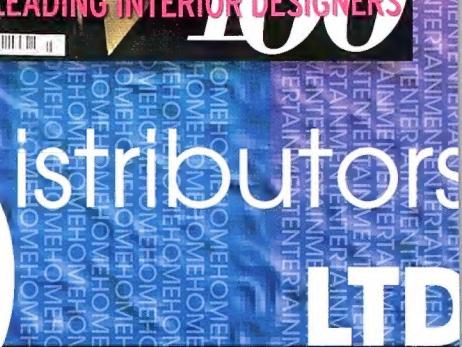
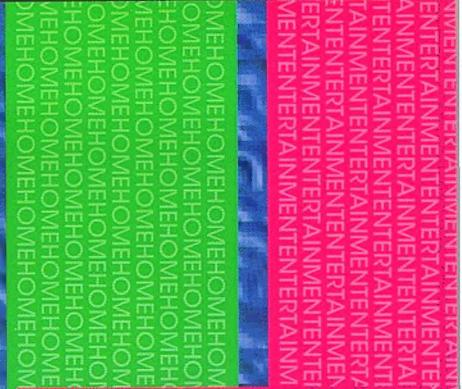
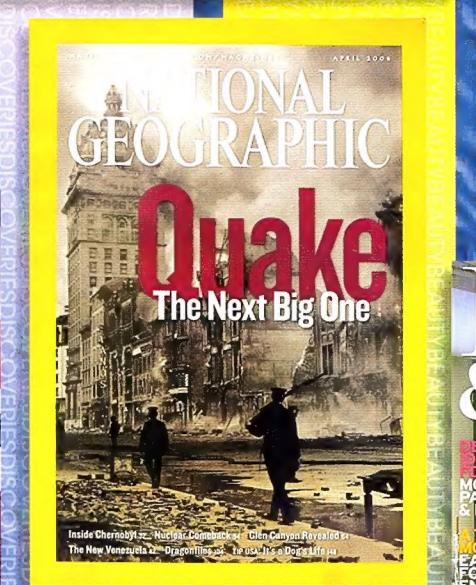
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# Stay in green and stay in the heart of Shanghai

## • Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai •

Green, and in the heart of Shanghai, enough said, isn't it? But the new Managing Director of Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai has more to tell. Here's a talk with Grant Gaskin, on this luxurious and graceful hotel.



Q: There are many luxury hotels of international brand groups, such as Holiday Inn, Hilton, Marriot, Inter-continental, Sheraton, Accor have settled in Shanghai, why are you so confident that Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai would be attractive for tourists?

Grant: The service quality and facilities can be guaranteed or improved by all international brand hotels, but the location and surrounding can not be changed. They are set. There goes a saying; 'Seeing is believing', so come to see by yourself and you will find that staying in our hotel can be as memorable as the destination.

Q: What do you think is the main feature

of Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai?

Grant: The hotel, although only six years old, is the only deluxe boutique hotel situated within 7 hectares of beautiful historic gardens in the heart of the consular district of Shanghai. This provides a tranquil and welcoming oasis for guests to relax and enjoy. Decorated in an elegant European style, the warm surroundings just complements perfectly with the taste of history.

The garden surroundings hold the legacy of urban planning that made the area one of the most desirable places to live in the early part of the 20th century. Mature trees and green grassy open

spaces can be seen from the windows of hotel's 190 rooms and suites. The opportunity to sit under the leaves or have the children play around you is just right at the entrance doorway.

Q: How would the hotel strengthen existing services meanwhile to develop new management concept to meet the increasing needs of guests and keen competition?

Grant: Working together to serve you, from individual travellers to all aspects of MICE businessmen, we will fulfill customer and client needs with a true heart, and keep our credo forever: 'Yes, I Can!', 'Making it Right' and '100% Guest Satisfaction Guarantee'.

The hotel is located in the heart of the historic French Concession, on the junction of Jiangsu, Xingguo and Huashan Road, just 15 minutes from the domestic Hongqiao Airport.

The elegant 190-room hotel is set amid 70 hectares of beautiful gardens dotted with villas and is close to major restaurants, shopping and entertainment facilities.

The Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai offers four levels of Executive Guest Floors featuring 40 stylishly-appointed suites and includes a Plaza Club Lounge, Plaza Club Reception and a Plaza Club Library.

Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai

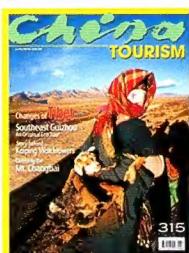
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A Tibetan girl carries a lamb.  
(by Wang Chen)



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## Climbing the Changbai Mountains Along the Border of China and North Korea

Photos by Wei Minxue, Yu Guozhi, Lang Qi, Shi Baoxiu, et al. Article by Shi Baoxiu

Generally people start climbing the mountains from the north or west slopes. Before it was officially opened last July, the south slope was mostly restricted to the public as it sits on the border between China and North Korea. Visitors now can take a cableway direct to the mountaintop, from where they can overlook Heavenly Lake.

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**No. 315 May/Jun 2008**

# Torch Relay to Go

It's a special day for all Chinese. We are honoured to witness the Olympic flame comes across the Five Continents and returns to China. In early May, we are excited with the festivities surrounding the arrival of the Olympic flame in Hong Kong. The torch marches in, giving the world a glance to look at this vibrant city. At all the famous scenic spots, I am impressed with the scene of a torchbearer carrying the flame on a Dragon Boat, demonstrating our unique traditional culture. The Beijing Olympics is definitely a window for others to know more about China. If you still want to witness the torch roaming around China before August, grasp your chance right now!

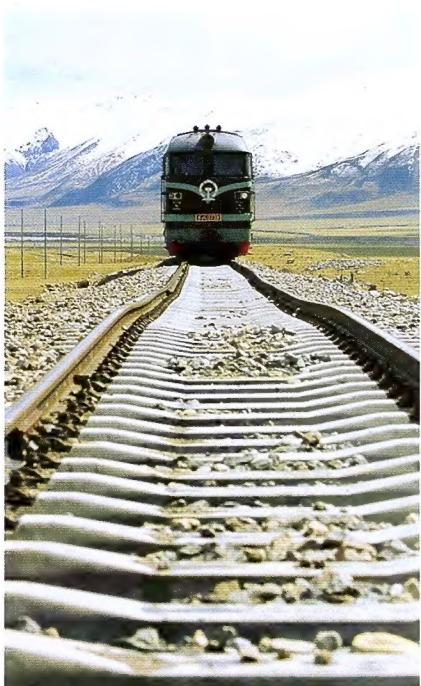
While everyone also laid an eye over the Tibet issue, you may also interest in witnessing the changes of Tibet over the past few decades. *China Tourism* presents you the extracts of *Tibet Through the Lenses of Father and Son Photographers*, two photographers recorded their lives and religious activities in Tibet in the early and mid 20th century.

For those who wish to see the unspoilt nature and culture, we introduce you to a new term, 'Ecological Tour', which refers to the natural state of ecology without any impact or interference from humans. There are four ecological museums in Guizhou Province. A tour to Southeast Guizhou will surely amaze you with the true indigenous Dong, Miao, Bouyei and even Han cultures. It's a leading example to show how balance can be achieved between tourism developments and preserving the original culture.

We are also pleased to present an interview with Allan Zeman, who brings Hong Kong a 'Lan Kwai Fong Legend' and revives the renowned Ocean Park that overcomes its competitor, with 4.9 million visitors last year, to become the No. 1 theme park in Hong Kong. Let's enjoy the story of a German-Canadian who has lived in Hong Kong for thirty years and his contributions to his chosen home.



At the Art Festival ceremony in southeast Guizhou. (by Huang Yanhong)



## China

### Luxury Train in China

Three custom-made trains are being readied to run over the world's highest railway. They will run between Beijing and Lhasa, and also between Beijing and Lijiang in Yunnan Province. Financing for the trains, known as Tangula Luxury Trains, totals \$140 million. The trains will offer passengers exclusive rail journeys to remote regions of China with three trains carrying a total of 96 guests each. The northern route traverses the Tibetan plateau from Beijing to Lhasa, Tibet (5 days / 4 nights). The southern route travels from Beijing to Lijiang, Yunnan (5 days / 4 nights), exploring the scenery of Guangxi and Yunnan. The remaining routes (4 days / 3 nights) go in the reverse direction on both routes.

## Aviation

### Philippine Airlines Fly Directly to China

Philippine Airlines (PAL) has just completed its maiden voyage into western China with a flight from Manila to Chongqing Municipality. The country's flagship carrier has begun to offer biweekly flights. A round-trip ticket for the 3.5-hour flight is around 1,400 yuan. Previously, passengers had to transfer at Hong Kong if they were travelling to the city from the Philippine capital. The carrier has also started offering flights to neighbouring Chengdu with a similar frequency. In addition, it has launched five weekly flights to the Macao. These new routes boost PAL's China service to 23 flights weekly to five destinations on the mainland.

## Jiangxi

### Buy Train Tickets Online!

Asiana Corporation (Asiana) announced that it plans to launch an online train ticket e-commerce portal for train travel in Jiangxi Province. Its initial target is to run a pilot program with the Nanchang Train Authority. Train Travel is the dominant mode of travel in China. The Chinese passenger train network is stretched beyond capacity, and passengers often spend 6-8 hours, and sometimes up to 2-3 days at the train station waiting for ticket purchases. Their goal is to build a model similar to 'Ticket Master' and create a simple transaction processing process. It plans to roll out to more cities after Nanchang, letting more passengers to enjoy such conveniences online. ■



## Beijing

### Beijing to Operate City Bus Tour

Beijing is set to boost its exposure and appeal to tourists ahead of the Olympic Games by offering city bus tours. Buses will travel along tourist routes taking in the city's most important sites and newest landmarks in the shortest time possible. Visitors will be able to stay on the tour for the entire route or get off the bus whenever they like. English and Chinese announcements will introduce passengers to scenery along the way and interactive activities will be provided while the bus is waiting in traffic. The tours are part of an initiative to boost the exposure of the city ahead of the Olympic Games.



## Shanghai

### Saving Trees with Global Positioning

Shanghai has put trees at least 300 years old into a global positioning system (GPS) map to monitor and protect these 'witnesses of the city's history'. All the 1,566 registered ancient trees have been equipped with a GPS device, which can help officials monitor if any trees are moved. The modernisation of the metropolis has become a major threat to the 'invaluable' trees, many of which have been damaged or even chopped down at construction sites. People can see information about each tree — species, age and height — by double-clicking on a digital map. The trees, the oldest of which dates back more than 1,200 years, include gingko, London Planetree, camphor and Lotus Magnolia.



## Shandong

### Multi-language Call Centre Set up for Olympics

Qingdao Olympics Sailing Committee will set up a call centre to provide information in different languages. Foreigners can simply dial a specific telephone number in Qingdao to listen to the information in their mother-language, including English, Korean, Japanese, German. The center now calls for more Italian, Czech and Hungarian speakers. Volunteers speaking fluent foreign languages will answer the calls made by language-troubled foreigners, giving information about travelling routes, weather forecast and sailing events schedule. Qingdao, as the co-host city of the Beijing Olympic Games, is expected to attract 200,000 visitors when Olympic sailing events kicks off here between 9-21 August. The dialing number of the call centre will be announced around 100 days ahead of the Olympic Games.

## China

### Poll — Best Places to Live in Asia

Among Chinese Mainland's cities, Shanghai was seen as the best place for top Asian professionals, while Beijing fared worse than other Chinese cities such as Nanjing and Tianjing owing to its low air quality. Hong Kong secured an 8th place within Asia and 15th worldwide. Macao was the 7th best place in Asia for Asian expatriates to live, following Taiwan. The result said that Singapore is the best city in Asia, while Macao secured itself in the 7th place in Asia and 59th in world ranking. The survey compares living standards in 254 locations globally according to categories including climate, air quality, health services, housing and utilities, social network and leisure facilities, infrastructure, and political tensions.



## Aviation

### China Bans Liquids on Domestic Flights

Baby food, cosmetics and medicine, among others, will all be banned from carry-on luggage on domestic flights following the implementation of the new regulation that has been gone into effect. The General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CAAC) issued a notice specifying details of what liquids could no longer be taken on board. For passengers with an infant, they can apply in advance with the airline to provide them with formula or baby food free of charge. This is part of the safety measures for the Olympics. Existing easy-boarding VIP services in which passengers can pay for priority boarding have also been cancelled.



## Hubei

### Four New Central China Travel Routes

Hubei Provincial Tourism Bureau is working on combining the travel resources of provinces in the centre of China in order to work out four new travel routes across this region. The four routes will feature the Three Kingdoms' culture, natural scenery and red travel. Red travel applies to scenic areas important for the history of the Communist Party and the birth of the People's Republic of China. Early as in 2006, the six provinces in the middle part of China (Hubei, Jiangxi, Henan, Anhui, Hunan and Shanxi) signed an agreement for regional travel cooperation to build a no-barrier travel area among these provinces.

## Aviation

### Southern America Connected to China

Delta Air Lines Inc. has made its China debut in April when it launches a Shanghai-Atlanta route. The opening provides the southeastern area of the United States with its first nonstop China flight, in addition to more convenience for Chinese travellers going to Caribbean and Latin American destinations. The route will serve as a bridge between Shanghai and 65 million residents in the southeastern U.S. who have active trade communications with China.

## China's Top Online Travel Agent Goes English

Ctrip is updating with an English version of its Web site ([www.ctrip.com](http://www.ctrip.com)) to attract expatriates living in China as well as inbound international travellers, and expects tourism to the country to swell with the Beijing Olympics this summer and the World Expo in Shanghai, 2010. Ctrip is China's top online travel agent. This Shanghai-based agent allows customers to reserve hotels, domestic air tickets, private tours and chauffeur services, employing more than 7,000 people across China and is now targeting the country's second-tier cities to drive growth. Ctrip's main domestic rival is elong Inc, which is majority-owned by U.S. online travel firm Expedia Inc.

## Shanghai's Metro Improves to Handle Increased Passengers

Shanghai's Metro Line 2 has started to dispatch its first train half hour earlier since March. The first train leaves at 5:55 am. Three train services will also be added during the morning peaks between 7 am to 9 am, and two extra services between 9 am and 4:30 pm. In addition, during evening peak hours, from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, the line will add one train. Metro operators have also put into effect a new practice where trains heading in the same direction now pull up on both sides of the platform during rush hours.



## New Hainan and More Airports Planned

The feasibility study for an airport in Boao, the venue of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) located on the east coast of Hainan Province, has been completed. Under the national plan for civilian airports, which has been approved by the State Council, China is going to build 97 new airports by 2020. It will have 192 airports by 2010 and 244 by 2020, up from 147 at the end of 2006. Three of these airports will be in Hainan, one in Boao and two other in Wuzhishan City in the centre of Hainan, and Dongfang City on the southwest coast. Hainan, which is separated from the Chinese landmass by the Qiongzhou Strait, has somewhat limited access. At present, it relies on air and ferry services, including train ferries. It already has two airports: one in Haikou, and the other in Sanya, a popular seaside resort on the southern end of the island.



## Pudong International Airport Terminal 2 Opened

Travellers at Pudong International Airport will have a smoother trip in future and can enjoy free wireless Internet services and cheaper food as Terminal 2, and its supporting facilities open for business in March. Terminal 2 offers passenger transit halls covering 4,000 square metres with 40 transit service counters designed to improve transit efficiency. The new traffic centre has opened as well, offering access to the airport shuttle services, long-distance buses, the Maglev station, taxis and parking lot.

## China's National Museum to be Expanded

Construction work has finally begun on a two-year enlargement project at China's National Museum at the heart of its capital. Upon completion, in March 2010, the expanded museum will cover 191,900 square metres after new buildings are built eastwards. The museum, standing to the east of the Tian'anmen Square in central Beijing, was built in 1959 as one of ten landmark buildings erected to mark the 10th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

## Japan Travel Visa Issued to Chinese Families

From March, a family group, with as few as two or three members, can obtain a Japan travel visa through designated travel agencies. The Japanese National Tourist Organisation expects this new visa policy can accelerate the growth of inbound tourists from China. The policy will go on trial for six months, after which the Japanese authority will make adjustments, and the visa policy will be gradually further eased.



## New Railway Linking Beijing and Fujian

China will build a railway linking Beijing to the southeastern province of Fujian to boost the economic development of the coastal region close to Taiwan. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2010. The railway will start from Bengbu City in eastern Anhui Province, where it will also join the Beijing-Shanghai Railway. It will then cross Anhui and Jiangxi provinces via Hefei, Huangshan and Shangrao before entering Fujian, where it will terminate in Fuzhou, the provincial capital.

The line is part of a 4,800-km rail network that China plans to build along the western coast of the Taiwan Straits. Fujian, just across the straits from Taiwan, has begun to build a new economic zone that is intended to accelerate cross-straits economic ties.



## Emirates Airlines Launched Chinese Web site

Emirates Airline has launched a Chinese web site ([www.emirates.cn](http://www.emirates.cn)) to provide for the needs of a growing number of Chinese travellers. One of the major advantages of the new site is the flight search and pricing system. Rather than just being presented with one price for a preferred time, passengers will be shown seat availability and prices for seven days before and after their requested travel date. It will also benefit passengers with cheaper fares. The Web site accepts foreign currency bank cards and dual-currency bank cards for payment. The Chinese aviation industry was predicted to grow by 11.1 percent annually from 2007 to 2011, boosted by its rapidly expanding economy.

## Fengyang Builds New Five-Star Hotel

An international five-star standard hotel is under construction in the western area of Fengyang, Anhui Province. The first phase of the hotel project has an investment of 180 million yuan and covers a construction area of 45,000 square metres. Its designing features combine modern hotel style and ancient royal concepts. This high-end hotel is expected to help improve the hospitality level around Fengyang, increase the time tourists stay while visiting Fengyang, enhance the image of the city, and expedite the development of tourism.

## Replica of 14th Century Ship Sets off at Xiamen

'The Princess Taiping' has set off a trial voyage at Xiamen, East China's Fujian Province. It was built in strict accordance with ancient Chinese shipbuilding techniques with natural materials. Senior craftsmen from the coastal cities of Fuzhou, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou took part in the construction of wind-powered ship. After the trial voyage, the junk will sail across the Pacific Ocean to San Francisco, the United States this May, and will return to China in March or April the following year. The junk, a flat-bottomed ship with a high mast and battened sails, was a typical mode of sea transport for Chinese on the maritime Silk Road. It is the first of its kind in China.

## Hong Kong Disneyland Goes Local with Mini Doll Show

Hong Kong Disneyland has put on its own version of the miniature show 'It's a Small World' in late April. This major facility, just opened recently, has 220 toys and 241 singing figures, including 38 Disney characters distributed across scenes standing for different continents and regions. A stylised Great Wall and a Chinese opera toy in red traditional gown will appear in the China scene. Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor, landmark buildings including the Bank of China Building and the International Financial Center II will be there, too. New versions of the theme song 'It's a small world' will be sung in Korean, Tagalog, Mandarin and Cantonese.



## New Deluxe Hotel Opens in Guangzhou

The Chateau Star River Hotel recently opened in Guangzhou. Built to international super platinum five-star standards, the hotel with an investment of 700 million yuan is positioned as a leisure business hotel. It is located beside Panyu Bridge, only eight minutes from Pazhou International Exhibition Centre, and a 45-minute drive from Baiyun International Airport. The hotel has 329 guestrooms, a 1,000-square-metre ballroom, six multifunction meeting rooms, food and beverage facilities, and a private yacht. Its design features a Mediterranean chateau style.



## Shaanxi History Museum Free for Public

Shaanxi History Museum has been officially opened to the public. The museum is adopting the method of issuing free tickets. There will be 4,000 tickets available per day, with 2,500 issued in the morning and 1,500 in the afternoon. To be opened from Tuesdays to Sundays, the opening hours are different according to different seasons. On Mondays (except the national holidays), the museum will be closed for renovation. The museum is located in Xi'an, and offers a full display of historic relics mainly excavated in the province.

## Mt. Huangshan: Increased Cable Car Fare

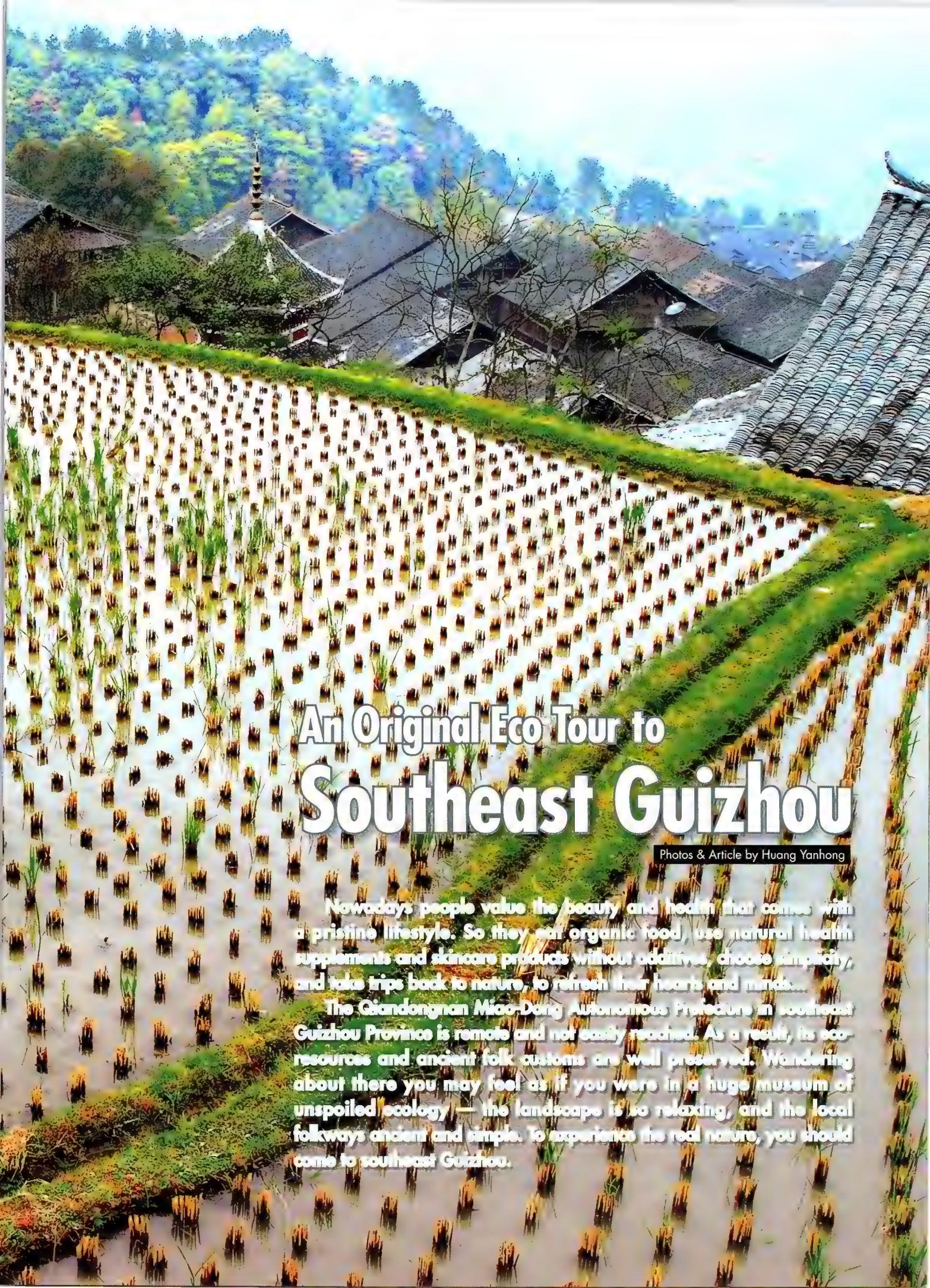
The latest news from Huangshan Scenic Area is that, from 1st April, the fare for the cable car has been increased. The price during the high season will rise from 65 yuan to 80 yuan per person; and the low season price will be 65 yuan per person, increased from 55 yuan. The fare is the same for both ways. This applies to all cables within the scenic area, hoping to spread the number of tourists in different areas evenly.



## ■ FEATURE STORY



The staff reporter  
The staff reporter  
The staff reporter  
The staff reporter



# An Original Eco Tour to Southeast Guizhou

Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong

Nowadays people value the beauty and health that comes with a pristine lifestyle. So they eat organic food, use natural health supplements and skincare products without additives, choose an eco-life, and take trips back to nature, to refresh their hearts and minds.

The Guandongnan Miao-Dong Autonomous Prefecture in southeast Guizhou Province is remote and not easily reached. As a result, its eco-resources and ancient folk customs are well preserved. Wandering about there you may feel as if you were in a huge museum of unspoiled ecology — the landscape is so relaxing, and the local folkways ancient and simple. To experience the real nature, you should come to southeast Guizhou.

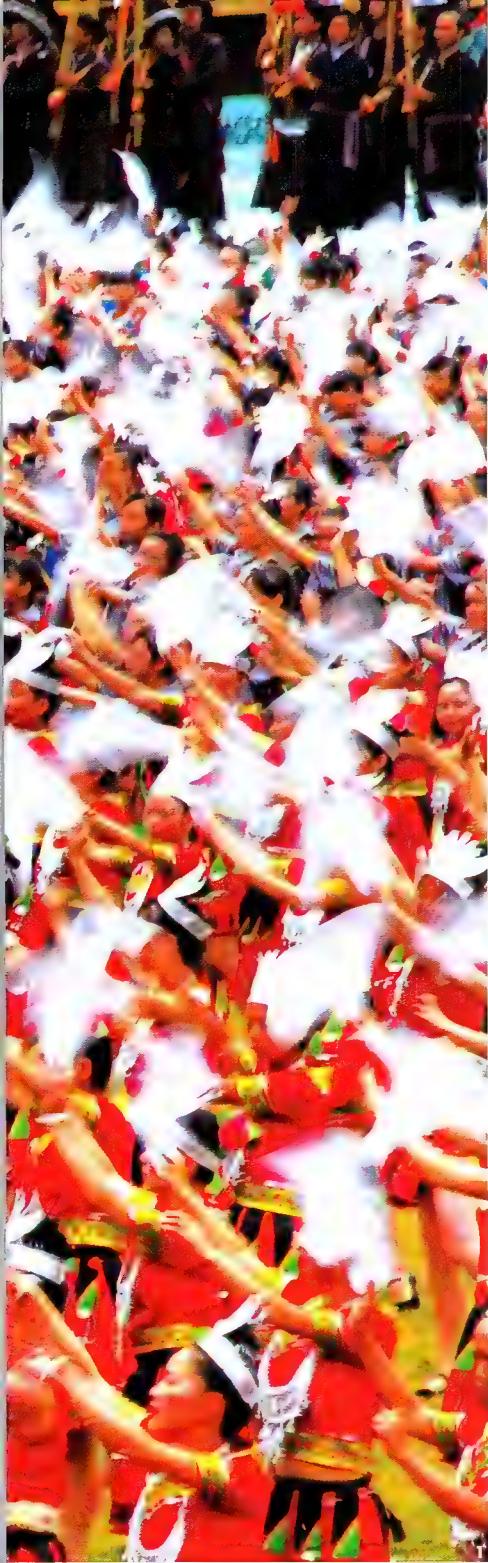


# Indigenous Art Festival

## Assembly of Excellent Shows

Original ecology is a new word, referring to the natural state of ecology without any impact or interference from humans. This concept has, in recent years, moved from the realm of natural science to social science, to refer to a culture that has retained its original state.

The Qiandongnan Autonomous Prefecture's held a timely Indigenous Art Festival showed off its pride in its unspoiled culture. Running for a few days, this festival enchanted the audience with a host of ethnic minority songs and dances that have been included into the national intangible cultural heritage list, including the Miao people's ancient songs from Huangping; the Dong people's Dage (Big Song) songs and Dong Opera from Liping and pipa songs from Leishan; the Miao's Jinji Dance from Danzhai; the Fanpai Miao Village's Wooden Drum Dance from Taijiang...



elegant Chinese. Another reporter came from Al-Jazeera. Fancy that they were all directing their lens at the art festival of the Miao-Dong villages.

1. In the Qiandongnan Indigenous Art Festival held in Kaili, the audience was excited by the passionate folk dance.

2. Teams from all over southeast Guizhou came to show the best of their special ethnic features.

### Tourist Map of Southeast Guizhou



Getting off the plane in the capital city Guiyang, I went by car to Kaili, capital of Qiandongnan Miao-Dong Autonomous Prefecture, together with many foreign journalists. I was somewhat surprised that so much overseas attention would be focused on a remote area that is barely known to the Chinese. A hardworking Indian reporter kept looking out the window and typing in a crazed fashion on his laptop. A young, attractive female French reporter spoke with us in fluent,



## THE FESTIVAL OF HOMESTEAD

I was impressed by Kaili as soon as I got there. The traffic ran smoothly, as the locals have a strong sense of public order and always use the zebra crossing to cross the street. I could hardly find anyone doing otherwise. Hence, a resident said proudly that those using the zebra crossing in Guiyang are from Kaili, and in Kaili, those not doing so are from Guiyang.

There was a huge crowd of people outside the Gymnasium of Ethnic Minorities at the city centre and inside, the Indigenous Art Festival's opening ceremony was starting with joyous songs and dances. The grand show of 'Original Homestead' had over 10,000 performers participating — 100 *lusheng* players, 1,000 drummers, and 10,000 singers presented thousands and thousands of people in the audience with a tremendously huge feast of ethnic

performing arts, flavoured with hundreds of types of Miao and Dong costumes. I heard that the Feige (Flying Song) of the Miao and Dage of the Dong, each show involving 10,000 singers, are applying to be enlisted in the Guinness World Records.

Looking down from the balcony, my eyes feasted on a sea of glowing colours from which emerged a splendid display of costumes dating back for centuries — the Wei-jin (3rd to 6th century) style outfit, the Tang Dynasty (618 — 907) hairstyles, the Song Dynasty (960 — 1279) attire... The modern

folk customs were also an eye-opener with a variety of shows of ethnic culture in terms of songs and dances, festivals, costumes, and weddings... Then came the Jinji Dance that had won an award in an international contest, Wooden Drum Dance of the Miao's Fanpai Village, Gupiao Dance, and *Lusheng* Dance... Then the embroidery display of the Dong and Miao came to the fore, with their mini skirts, a hundred-bird and batik dresses, together with silver ornaments... all exhibiting the magic of their ethnic features. Finally, the shotgun tribe of

### What Is Original Ecology?

In the early 20th century, a type of 'living museum' that aims to protect indigenous culture appeared in northern Europe. This is a vast cultural space centring on the special features of tangible and intangible cultures, either with or without form, including folk customs and festivals, fairs, residential houses, performances and games.

In the 1960s, France and other European countries started to promote 'ecological museums'. In the late 1990s, the Chinese and Norwegian governments signed an agreement to jointly build four ecological museums at Suojia, Zhenshan, Tang'an and Longli in Guizhou Province, to protect the cultures of the Miao, Bouyei, Dong and ancient Han ethnic groups.

Due to industrial development, our ecological environment has increasingly deteriorated, proving a great challenge towards maintaining biological and species diversity. Thankfully, the self-sealed environment of southeast Guizhou, where has stood still, means that the indigenous culture continues to remain visible to all visitors.

Basha appeared on the stage: after a series of ancient style warriors in action, a number of shotguns were fired off up into the sky, which brought the hall down to great applause.

### 1. Men from the 'shotgun tribe'

In my third day at Kaili, the city was no less clamorous as the streets were still packed with crowds of people. The whole city was strewn with show rings



surrounded by an audience on any open space available.

A group of women walked over, each beating a wooden stool. I was told that they came from the Heba Village, Majiang County, of the Yao ethnic group. Originally they belonged to the Rao ethnic group, but because their population was small, merely 800 households, they joined the Yao people. The women said that their ancestors used to scare away attacking enemies by beating wooden stools to imitate the sound of gunshot, and this was passed on down. Today with the war years gone, no one uses the club that way anymore, so it has become an interesting dance.

1. Men from the 'shotgun tribe' of Basha present an outstanding impression in the city.

2. A dazzling get-together of the rich ethnic resources in southeast Guizhou.

3. The opening ceremony attracts journalists from around the world, all trying to get the best vantage position.





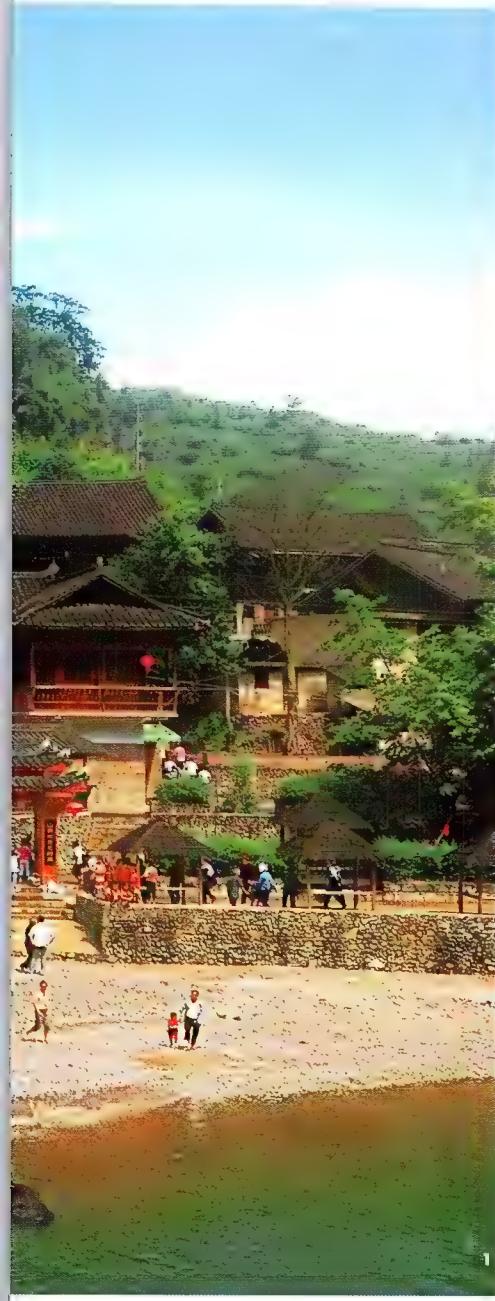
# Bala River A Perfect Combination of Cultural and Natural Splendours

Originating from Mount Leigong, the Miaoling Mountains' major peak in Guizhou, the Bala River runs 57 km long, passing through Kaili City and Leishan County, before emptying into Qingjiang River. The area along the river is thickly strewn with villages, and is known as a 'Five-km gorge with Miao customs'. Today, this area has become Kaili's closest holiday resort area.

Starting from Kaili, the first stop in the Bala River area is the Miao village

of Zhaiwa. Its villagers are good singers and dancers, and there are five copper

drums and two *lusheng* (a folk reed-pipe) performing teams, one male and one



of the second lunar month. On that day, every family is busy boiling red eggs, fish and shrimps, which are placed on the bridgeheads as a sacrifice to the God of the Bridge. Any passers-by will be invited to enjoy the wine and meat, and given some glutinous rice balls and red eggs.

#### THE JIDAO MIAO VILLAGE

Next came the Jidao Village, another holy place for the Miao people to offer sacrifices to their ancestors. Jidao village (meaning deep pool in the Miao language) as there is a deep pool in the Bala River south of the village. In drizzling rain we visited a century-old granary, some equally old houses, the Lusheng Hall and an ancient tree where, according

to our guide from the village, the young people meet on a date. She also told us a Miao trick — boys will signal the girl of his choice by whistling. So in the days following, our young group members whistled a lot too.

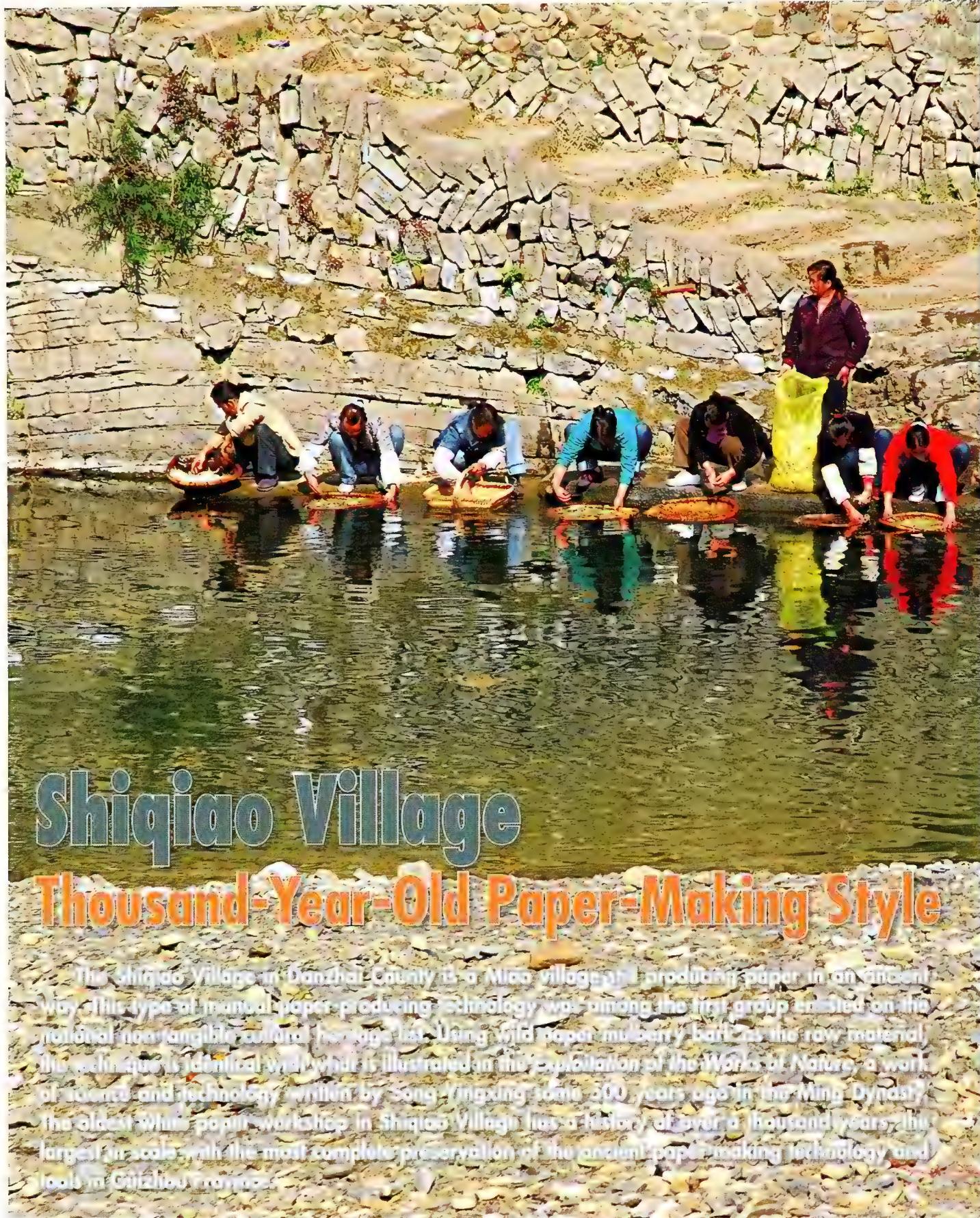
Among the village's musicians, there is a 74-year-old lady who is said to be the 'Empress of Songs'. She started singing in her childhood and knows the lyrics to numerous songs which, if she sang them all, would go on for days. Accepting our invitation, she began to sing in a clear and bright voice, pure and natural.

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1. With convenient transportation and charming scenery, Bala River has become the tourist resort nearest to Kaili.
2. Making silverware in a village silversmith's workshop.
3. The farmer's meal at Jidao Miao Village is special and tasty.

female. At each festival, the villagers would hold traditional activities of beating copper drums, playing the *lusheng* and dancing under the moon. The stove wine is a rustic treat for guests from afar — a pot of sour fish soup is boiled over a fire of basswood charcoal, to go with preserved ham and blood curd prepared in a special Miao flavour.

Located on the left bank of the river, the Pingzhai village is especially known for its festival to offer sacrifices to the God of the Bridge, held on the second day



# Shiqiao Village

## Thousand-Year-Old Paper-Making Style

The Shiqiao Village in Danzhai County is a Miao village that produces paper in an ancient way. This type of manual paper-producing technology was among the first group enlisted on the national intangible cultural heritage list. Using wild paper mulberry bark as the raw material, the technique is identical with what is illustrated in the *Exploitation of the Works of Nature*, a work of science and technology written by Song Yingxing some 500 years ago. In the Ming Dynasty, the oldest paper workshop in Shiqiao Village has a history of over a thousand years, thus large in scale and the most complete preservation of the ancient paper-making technology and tools in China, according to the book.



Clear streams running through the village are vital to the ancient paper-making industry.

About 40 km from the Danzhai County town, Shiqiao is a stockaded mountain village where most of the villagers are Miao. The village was named after a natural stone bridge, firstly as Shiqiaobao, then simply Shiqiao, meaning stone bridge. I never expected that paper-making, one the four great ancient Chinese inventions, could have found its echo in this remote Miao village in Guizhou. The advantages of having paper mulberry trees growing all over the mountains provide the basis and natural resources for the complete preservation of the primitive eco-friendly paper-making technology and industry in the Shiqiao Village.

Manual paper-making workshops can be found everywhere in the village, where people are busy with all kinds of work involved, from peeling hemp, soaking paper mulberry hemp, producing tree pulp, molding the paper... Each of the dozen production steps is done manually, identical with the statements in the great book *Exploitation of the Works of Nature*.

#### Shiqiao Village

Wang Xingwu is a big paper producer in the village. Located at the end of the main street, his house is quite new, its front entirely open showing many types of paper samples. Two elderly people were sitting at the gate selecting peeled paper mulberry fibres — a common scene along the street. So far the old paper-making techniques of his family have been passed down for 18 generations.

Wang Xingwu learned how to make paper from his father. Since he had nothing to do after graduation from high school, he dedicated himself to making paper at home. The traditional white paper popular in the village was the basis of the village's paper-making industry, done the same way by every family and used mainly for wrapping paper and for sacrificial purpose when visiting

ancestors' tombs. But Wang wanted to do more than this. Starting from 1998, he started to innovate, developing eight series of new products, including crepe paper, flower-grass paper, cloud dragon paper, etc. Of outstanding texture, these types of highly decorative paper soon spread overseas. The revival of the ancient paper-making industry has also propelled the tourist industry in the village, making these ancient workshops novel tourist attractions.

The flower-grass paper is especially suitable for making lanterns and greeting cards. The hostess also introduced to me another kind of new product — an upscale reproduction antique xuan paper that was recently moulded to their satisfaction and became an instant hit right after it was produced.

#### Wang Xingwu's workshop

Wang Xingwu's workshop is right



limewater, the paper mulberry bark is put into and washed by a stream for 24 hours to clean it. Then the fibres are crushed before turning them into paper pulp in a pulping trough. Meanwhile, to give it some colour or to improve the paper's ink-absorbing capacity, some plants can be added. The pulping trough, also called stone trough, is about two metre long, one metre each in length and height. The pulp needs continuous stirring with a bamboo stick, and how long it is stirred can determine the thickness and density of the fibres in the paper. The next finalising step is the most crucial — the soaked pulp is passed through a fine sieve made of special bamboo called songtaozhu, which has pretty long sections between nodes. Whatever remains after each filtration then becomes a piece of paper.

His wife Wen Youying skilfully put the sieve into the pulping trough; when





it came out, it was covered with a thin layer of pulp. Shaking it lightly with the skill that would ensure the right thickness of the paper, she placed the wet pieces of paper, one upon another, onto a pressing board. She said that there is a secret ingredient in the pulp that prevents

the pieces from sticking to one another. After these wet pieces were piled up high, woodblocks were placed on top and levers manipulated to press the water out of the paper.

Before the thick pile of paper is completely dried, it is taken to the drying

room where one by one the paper is pressed onto a heated hollow wall. After it is dry, the paper is taken down from the wall one by one. According to Wen Youying, white paper is sold for 20 to 30 cents, and a worker can produce 500 pieces of paper a day. But coloured paper sells for five to 10 yuan, but a worker with five assistants on such a time-consuming task can only produce a few dozen pieces daily.

1. Flower and birds painting on the excellent Chinese painting paper.

2. Lowering the sieve into the stone trough to get a fine layer of pulp.

3. Lantern made of the flower-grass paper that has a unique texture.

4. Shaking for an even pulp layer before gently spreading it on the board to form a piece of paper.

5. The flower-grass paper is one of the new products developed by Wang Xingwu.

6. In autumn — a harvesting season in Southeast Guizhou, the farming area presents a pleasant landscape scroll.

7. With the village's time-honoured paper-making history, every family in Shiqiao Village is involved in the trade.



## Kala Is OK

Relying on a 500-year-old indigenous skill of weaving birdcages, a village of ethnic minority people named Kala has become widely known as a 'village of bird-cage art'. Now with every family engaged in the trade, the village has an annual output of 100,000 birdcages. In this village where birdcages have begun to get people on the road to prosperity, villagers no longer need to find jobs elsewhere. On the contrary, the trade has attracted workers from outside, as well as tourists, which has greatly improved the economy and the quality of life in the village.



When we entered the village in heavy rain, Wang Yuhe, chairman of the Villagers' Committee and pioneer of the birdcage industry, had been waiting for us holding an umbrella for a long time.

Ethnic minority people like to raise birds and so are fussy about the birdcage. Ancient villagers there liked to weave birdcages, but that had never developed into a trade to make a living.

A decade ago when some kids in the village took caged birds to sell in the

nearby city, the buyers paid for them but set the birds free, taking with them only the empty cages. Wang Yuhe was enlightened and believed that this could be a market with great potential. So he organised young villagers to learn the cage-weaving skills from older ones, while starting marketing and establishing a birdcage association to organise sales. The association purchased raw material in bulk and gave it to villagers. When collecting the birdcages the processing fees were paid at 8 yuan per cage for ordinary ones and 100~200 yuan for finely made top-quality ones.

### Kala Village Birdcages

Birdcages have become the major industry in Kala Village, with 30 percent of the products sold to Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong, and over 40 percent sold on the Internet.

Kala Village used to be one of the poor villages in the county, with an average arable land of only 1/12 acre per capita to feed a comparatively big population. These households can earn over 100 yuan daily, higher than the civil servants working in the county government.

### Visiting Kala Village

Wang Yuhe showed me around a few families making birdcages. Yang Fusheng and his wife can process 14 birdcages a day, the fastest in the village. The hostess was assembling a cage when we entered her house. First she put in place four bamboo sticks symmetrically, then another four, followed by the shutter door. She made the cage bottom more solid by putting in shorter bamboo sticks, also making it more beautiful. Her husband, sitting in the outer room, cleaved the bamboo pieces with a firewood knife, then boiled the bamboo for an hour together to ensure the cage would be bug free. Only after boiling can the bamboo



pieces be split into long sticks, have holes drilled and cleaved... This is the rough processing. Yang said that a household operation is most suitable for making birdcages, and a two-person team, one doing the rough work and the other the fine, is the most efficient.

The materials used for birdcage are mostly *Phyllostachys congesta* and mao bamboo. *Phyllostachys congesta* has long sections without any markings and so is chosen for the sake of beauty and easy cleaving to produce straight sticks. To make the cage hoops the mao bamboo is used as it is thick so holes

can be bore through it to fix the sticks. Today the villagers are no longer looking for jobs outside the village; instead, there have been more than 30 people from elsewhere working in the village. Mr. Wu nowadays girls elsewhere are all looking for husbands in his village, since coming here is tantamount to entering a technical school.

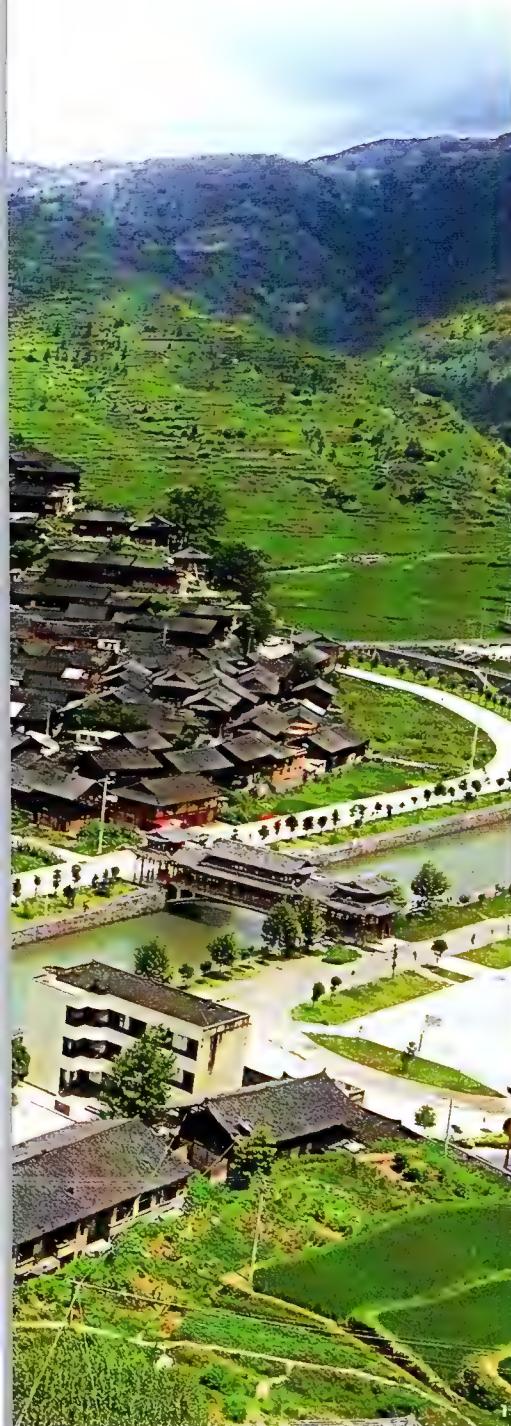
1. Each family is a complete assembly line for birdcage production.
2. All the birdcages are piled at the village head's home, waiting for collection.
3. Assembling a birdcage is technically demanding.
4. This woman is recognised as the fastest birdcage producer in the village.



Xijiang

## China's Largest Miao Village

The Miao people have inhabited the mountains since ancient times. Located north of Leigong Mountain, Xijiang Miao Village is 37 km from the town of Leishan County. Comprising 1,100 households and more than 5,700 residents, it is now China's biggest Miao village. Xijiang in the Miao language named Xishi means the habitat of a branch of Miao. In the ancient stilted house where I stayed in the village, I met the incumbent head of the village, learned the ancient rules of the patriarchal clan system, and also came to know a farmer painter — Li Yufu.



On the mountain path quite a distance from the village, I saw the Xijiang Miao Village — allegedly the largest Miao village in China — and was stunned by the sight of stilted houses all over the mountain. Almost everyone in the car exclaimed 'What a big village!' With a river flowing at the foot of the mountain, rows of wooden buildings lining along the street and children frolicking, the village is really charming. The residential

houses follow the contour and are set together closely on the slopes. These wood houses are all supported on a system of mortise and tenon-joined brackets, and even after a century's wind and rain, they are still proudly upright.

### 3. Xijiang Miao Village

Some girls carrying loads were coming over on the mountain path. Upon my asking, about the origin of their ancestors, a girl said that the Miao

people are the descendants of Chiyou, who was defeated by Huangdi or the Yellow Emperor, the ancestor of the Han people. As a loser of the first big war in history, Chiyou was degraded to a monster with a human body, ox hooves, four eyes and six hands. The Miao would

1. A distant view of the whole Xijiang Miao Village.

2. The new tower recently built by the farmer painter Li Yufu commands a good view of the village.

3. The Miao village of over 1,000 families has neat and clean streets, and the development of tourism has seen some initial achievements.





never accept such a distortion, but they do not resent the suppression of their ancestors by the Yellow Emperor.

Li Yufu, native to Yedong Village, is a fairly well-known farmer painter. As one of the eight natural villages south of Xijiang, Yedong Village has 70 households, all having Li as the surname. Li Yufu told me that he is the youngest child in his family and liked to draw pictures since childhood.

### Rustic Farmer Paintings

Looking at Li's paintings, I found them bucolic and lovely, in a strong earthy rustic style. *Obstacle*, shows very vividly a girl's parents trying to stop their

daughter from marrying her sweetheart by blocking her way: her mother is pushing the groom, and the father is dragging the daughter away, while beside them her younger brother is also seething with rage... Now Li has begun to sell his paintings at home, normally 300 yuan a piece. Last year a total of 300 paintings were sold.

Besides his painting, Li Yufu is also concerned about the farm work on his five mu land (one third hectare), though it is handled quite well by a hired hand as he cannot afford time for it. In the village if the land lies idle, the owner would become a laughing stock.

Li's house had just been expanded.

He spent 70,000 yuan on a three-storey wooden tower which, among all the houses there, commands the best view of the whole village. He has named it 'Fengxiang (Fragrance of Maple Tree) Tower', as the tree is the Miao's totem and he happens to have one in front of his house. It is said that after Chiyou, the Miao's ancestor, was executed, his shackles were taken off by his executioner and thrown in the mountains. The blood-stained shackles then took root in the wilderness and grew into a tract of maple trees which are as red as blood and fire.

### The Village Head — A Primary School Teacher

We had a very formal dinner at Li Yufu's home. He laid on a sumptuous array of food over a 8-metre-long table in his wood tower with sumptuous food. To our excitement, he also invited to dinner the head of Xijiang Village, the so-called King of Miao in this largest Chinese Miao village. The village head, named Tang Shoucheng, is in charge of internal affairs, including village life.

Shortly after sunset, Village Head Tang came. Working as a primary school teacher, he is normally just an ordinary villager and doesn't assume the village head post except for major celebrations. The Guzang Festival, the largest Miao sacrificial ceremony held every 13 years,





is always presided over by the head of the village during the whole process, from slaughtering the animals to offering the sacrifices to the ancestors.

#### Deep in the Countryside Xijiang Maio Village

In addition to the Village Chief, there are also the Village Venerable. Xijiang consists of over 10 natural villages, each electing one or two elderly men with strong integrity and reputation. Over the

years village affairs concerning mediation of disputes, reward and punishment, are all discussed and decided by these venerable elderly men. Any villagers breaking village rules and regulations will be fined, and for a serious case a penalty of four 120s — 120 jin (60 kilograms) of glutinous rice, 120 jin of meat, 120 jin of flour, and 120 strings of firecrackers (making 12,000 sounds) — shall be imposed, which will add up to 4,000 to 5,000 yuan. These venerable

elderly men are also responsible for meting out penalties to anyone who has disturbed social security. For instance, just days ago a villager who caught fish in the river by means of electric shock was fined 150 yuan.

1. It is an honour to dine with the village head.
2. *Having Guests Today*, painted by Li Yufu, in a rustic style.
3. Upon entering the village, villagers were ready to sell all kinds of crafts.
4. The scenery around Xijiang Maio Village is a true ecological museum.



## Shanmu River Water Dragon Show

Flowing in northwest Shiping County, the Shanmu River has the reputation of a 'Divine Mineral Water Channel' because its excellent water is imbued with some natural healing powers. Noted mostly for its rafting and Water Dragon performance, the Shanmu River is unique in the original ecological culture in southeast Guizhou.

Entering the scenic area of the Shanmu River by electric bus, I was suddenly in a world of green — the winding mountain road is enveloped in thickly grown forest, with crystal clear springs streaming around the mountain. Before long the bus reached the starting point for rafting, just in time to catch the opening ceremony of the Shanmu River Rafting Festival. In addition to the excited and joyful local residents, the ceremony was also attended by singers and dancers from Hulunbuir Grassland in

Inner Mongolia and from Xinjiang. Before the performance had finished, people in the square had begun to move restlessly and many rafters went down to the river — actually two thirds of the audience were standing in water.

the Shiping County seat area. In years of drought, the local people would spontaneously organise the dragon dance parade, moving from lane to lane, and wherever the parade went every family would pour water on the 'dragon' with wooden basins or ladles. According to the local custom, the paraders must be virgin boys and their total must be in odd number. Only in this way could the Thunder God grant people some rain.

Shortly after they began to warm up the two 'water dragon' were attacked by rafters and completely splashed with

The Water Dragon Show started right after the performance. The Water Dragon Parade used to be a popular folk sacrificial activity to pray for rain in



with the splashing water. Moved and grateful, the rafters returned the greetings with applause and repeated cheers.

The luckiest were the two members of our tour group from Beijing. They met with two female dancers from Xinjiang who didn't know how to row the boat and asked them for help. Without any hesitation, the two young men shouldered the responsibility of protectors and each of them had a beauty sitting on the boat. The

#### Tips for Rafters:

- Take some money with you as there are barbecue stands along the river where you can get something to eat.
- There are water-proof bags that can be rented at the wharf, 10 yuan each, which are big enough to hold clothes, camera, cell phone, etc. Someone can escort your belongings along the whole voyage if you wish.
- It's best to wear sandals rather than be barefooted, as you might hurt your feet on the slippery stony surfaces.
- Rafters will be drenched, so take some dry clothes with you.

old trick of heroes rescuing beauties really worked and so during dinner the girls gave them flirtatious glances and the two guys happily went over to take photos with them, leaving their telephone numbers and even arranging to meet later in Beijing, to the jealousy of other group members.

1. People rejoicing at the water dragon show.

2. Children enjoying rafting are escorted for their safety.

3. Hundreds of rubber rafts floating down the Shennu River.



water. Unable to endure it anymore, some of the dragon performers had to become fighters to counterattack. So the dragons and rafters splashed water wildly on each other — the more auspicious water the luckier.

#### Water Rafting

Right after the Water Dragon Show, the rafting began. Hundreds of rubber boats started out on the river simultaneously, and in no time the surface of the river was fully covered. The rafters had barely set out when the spectators splashed water over them. As they rowed forward, they were also greeted by a ring of songs from a group of singers standing on the bank, which contrasted sharply





## An Isolated Town of Ancient Han Culture

In southeast Guizhou there is an 'isolated island of culture' as it is referred to by scholars — Longli.

It was once a Ming Dynasty military fortress, built over 600 years ago. Soldiers coming all the way from the Central Plains garrisoned and lived here, retaining all the cultural customs of the Han people. The old town is one of the four original ecological museums jointly set up by China and Norway.

Standing among waterwheels, buffalos, spoon-drifts and water fields, the old town has a square outside its city gate, around which are some hotels and restaurants. Inside the



town, time seems to have turned back to centuries ago; its residents sit in leisure under the age-old gate, playing chess, chatting, and enjoying the cool breeze.

1. The upturned eaves of the ancient houses have kept this architectural feature of the Central Plains.

2. The age of the ancient town is more perceptible at the gate in the morning sun.

3. The dragon dance performance on the Wugong Street has become the most striking feature of Longli.





### Wang Changling Exiled to Longli

Wang Changling (689 — 756), a frontier poet of the Tang Dynasty, was the first to introduce the Central Plains culture to Longli.

Just as most of the upright men of letters do not have smooth official careers, Wang had been repeatedly framed before offending the emperor so again he was exiled to Longli. Dedicated to his duty and taking care of the people, he is especially remembered for taking a breath of culture to the remote mountain villages.



People in Longli are proud of Wang as well as grateful to him. After his death, the locals built Zhuangyuan (Number One Scholar) Bridge, Zhuangyuan Temple and Zhuangyuan Pavilion by the Longxi River. In the 16th century some county gentlemen also built a Zhuangyuan Tomb for him. I happened to see a great dragon dance parade in Longli. Nine mighty teams of long dragons passed through the city gate and the eastern street before going out via the west city gate. Then the dragons moved along the ridge of the green field, crossed the Ming Dynasty flagstone bridge, and went on the Zhuangyuan Bridge. Each dragon on the bridge had to perform in turn to show respect to Wang Changling. Then all the dragons paid homage to the Zhuangyuan Pavilion in a memorial ceremony.



### Wang Changling Exiled to Longli

The Longli Town was built in the early Ming Dynasty, when a large scale uprising of the Dong and Miao minorities that shocked the whole nation was staged. So Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (1328 — 1398) sent his sixth son to lead 300,000 troops to fight the local people for eight years. After the war was over, the imperial court set up a garrison here which, similar to the production and construction corps today, was self-reliant in peace times but would go to battle in war time. There were 360 regular military

service men, led by 13 officers.

The solid city wall of Longli forms a barrier to communication between people in and outside the wall. Those living inside were imperial troops, superior to the commoners; while people living outside were disadvantaged Miao and Dong villagers who had lived there for ages. Adhering tenaciously to the Central Plains culture, the Longli Town formed a system of its own and has kept it alive to this day.

Now the old city wall is still as grandiose as ever, over 200 m in length and width each, occupying an area of almost 50,000 sq m. Four city gates open to the east, south, west and north, respectively.

Divided into nine residential areas, the town has three major streets and six laneways. The streets are all paved with cobble stones, laid in the patterns of ancient coins. The most interesting one is the South Street, called Wugong (Centipede) Street, as it has a pattern of a huge centipede. In the early Qing Dynasty in mid 17th century, Wu Sangui, Prince of Pingxi (who opened the gates of the Great Wall to help Manchu troops overthrow the Ming Dynasty), sent his men to Longli,

took over the seal of Longli's 1,000-man-battalion commander, and reduced Longli to an office with only a small garrison. People at Longli hated Wu Sangui because he made them lose their military position and degraded Longli to a mere ordinary village.

To give vent to their rage, the soldiers simply laid the street in the design of a centipede (as it sounds the same as Wu), so that they could symbolically trample on him every day. Such a militant temperament is still visible in the Longli people today, for instance, when they perform a dragon dance, all residents, adults and children alike dance so vigorously and skilfully that they don't even notice when they are dripping profusely with sweat. The dragon dance performers are organised by their streets, and eight to ten neighbouring households will form a dragon. There will never be short of dragon dancers who, coming as soon as called, are always ready to stand in the team. This is absolutely a legacy from their military ancestors.

### Adhering to the Ancient Culture

There are now 800 households with

a total of 3,700 people and 72 family names — all Han surnames and almost all descendants of ancient service men — in Longli old town. Their ancestors came from the nine provinces of the Central Plains, including Anhui and Jiangxi. Instead of being refugees or migrants who came to seek refuge with relatives, they were soldiers with strict discipline and organisation who didn't need to mingle with other social groups or to learn other skills for survival. Besides guns and swords, they also brought to Longli advanced farming skills. As a group sustained by the Confucian culture that stressed filial piety and loyalty to one's family and the sovereign, as well as education based on the imperial examination system, they didn't care to identify with the local culture around them. Thus the two cultures — one

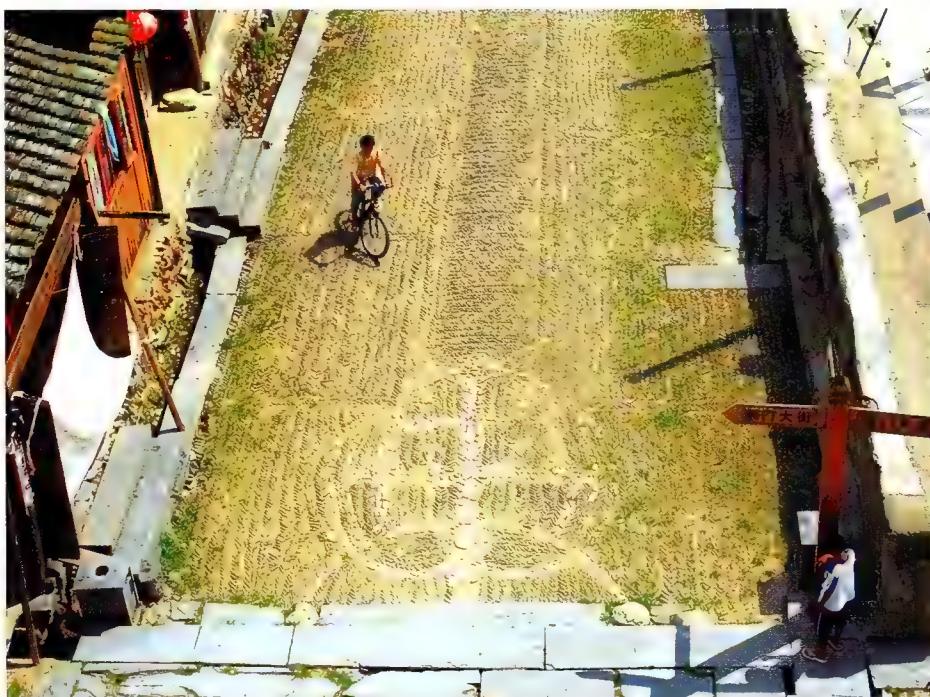
1. Children playing near the old ancestral temples.

2. Zhuangyuan Bridge, built by villagers in memory of Wang Changling.

3. Women washing clothes in the morning at a small river by the village.

4. The soldiers simply laid the street in the design of a centipede (as it sounds the same as Wu), so that they could symbolically trample on Wu Sangui every day.

5. Longli villagers planted a white pine in memory of John Gjestrup.





sustained by the imperial military force and the Central Plains' Han culture, the other integrated with nature and represented by the indigenous Miao and Dong culture — have stood facing and confronting each other for centuries.

### Opera Painting Dragons in Longli

Jiang Huayuan, almost 70 years old, is the 25th generation of the Jiang family, one of the four largest surnames at Longli. At the opening ceremony of the Longli Dragon Dance Art Festival held on 30 July, Mr. Jiang, standing in front of the dragon teams like a commander, spoke loud and clear as if reading out an oath. Then he put eyes onto the dragons and right after, the groups of dragons jumped to the east city gate, dancing as they moved along the gravel road. The vivacious dance of a dozen dragon teams, each with a dozen dancers, turned the old town into a sea of boisterous revelry.

Children also joined the dragon dance. Being small but nimble, they ran faster than adults and the small dragons they formed were especially dynamic and vibrant.

The final and the most exciting performance came when three long dragons twisted and turned before striking a pose in front of the audience and forming three big Chinese characters into '中國龍 (Chinese dragon)'. People all around broke into applause and cheers.

The painted-face dragon dance, peculiar to Longli and China, was staged in the afternoon. Shortly after lunch, all the dragon dancers gathered before the gate of the Ecological Museum to have their faces painted. Four make up artists were busy as bees painting the faces of over a hundred dancers. Children were the most overjoyed.

### Painting Faces for Han Opera To Perform in the Wall

Walking in the street early in the morning, I saw a group of villagers doing makeup in a lane for a Han Opera show.

The Han Opera, originating from Hubei Province, spread to Longli from Hunan Province over 200 years ago. *Madam White Snake* is one of the traditional operas in its repertoire.

Among the few costumes they have saw one already 200 years old. This is a dragon gown; although it was quite worn out, a closer look still revealed its elaborate needlework. The actor wearing the gown was almost 70 years old, a backbone of the troupe, good at both singing and martial art performance. As he hung up the dragon gown, he told me that every time after the show, he would air it because he dared not wash it; if he did, the gown would fall to pieces. Now after 200 years the gown really stinks.

### Rare Marriages with the Minorities

There had been no intermarriage between people in and outside Longli Town until after the 1960s when there were a few exceptions. I met a villager name Hu, whose ex-wife is a Dong. He said that so far no girl in Longli would like to marry someone in the Miao or Dong village, and even if she would, her parents would set themselves against it, because living conditions are harsh out in the mountains inhabited by the minority people.

His ex-wife's ancestors used to be Longli residents who were driven out by the Ming troops in the war years and went to live at Rongjiang. In 1996 his father-in-law came to Longli in search of the traces of his ancestors, hoping to find his daughter a Longli husband. So



Mr. Hu came to know her and they got married. He found out after marriage that the minority women don't like to have Han husbands, because these men like to use obscenities and call people bad names. Minority women are soft-spoken and never shout except to express joy

with songs. Whenever he swore she would become unhappy and they often quarrelled because of this. Two years ago they had to divorce. Recently he took their son to visit her village and got along with her quite well. He admitted that thinking about the life there, the villagers really enjoy an unadulterated ecological environment.

1. A fabulous scene of Han opera with the dragon gown.
2. Crowds of women in front of the Zhuangyuan Stele ready to burn joss sticks at the Zhenwu Temple.
3. The dragon team keeps dancing all the way through the fields.
4. The painted face dragon is characteristic of Longli, and the children have great fun and excitement having their faces painted.

### John Gjestrum — Dedicated to Protecting Ethnic Cultural Heritage

In the Longli Ecological Museum built in 1997, the folk customs and culture characteristic of Longli have fully and accurately been recorded by the exhibits and materials. This is one of the four ecological museums in Guizhou jointly set up by China and the Kingdom of Norway. Sent by the Norwegian government, John Gjestrum came to Longli twice for inspection and worked painstakingly on the plan and construction of the museum. He evaluated Longli highly during the inspection, 'I didn't expect that people here have preserved their ethnic cultural heritage so well. We are really astonished.'

People at Longli were even more astounded to hear that on 6 April 2001 he passed away after a sudden heart attack during an inspection tour to Siberia, Russia. Regretfully John Gjestrum was never able to see the Ecological Museum when it was completed in 2004. Yet people at Longli have not forgotten him. On 19 May 2001 Longli villagers planted a white pine by the Zhuangyuan Temple and named it John Gjestrum's Tree, in memory of this international friend.



# Dong Customs Unchanged in Tang'an Village

As one of the four original ecological museums, the Tang'an Natural Museum of Dong Ethnic Culture in Liping County, was built specifically for its potential — to enable the village to progress from being economically independent to culturally independent. This would ensure that villagers appreciate the beauty of their unadulterated ecology and consequently, to protect it while improving their primitive economy. ■



Tang'an, like Longli, is a Dong village that has attracted great interest from a Norwegian musicological expert.

This was my second entry into

southeast Guizhou. In our drive from the Dongbao Township in Sanjiang, Guangxi, into Guizhou's Jiangkou County, there was a section of some 20 km which

was so difficult that I will remember it all my life. The road has been in poor condition for decades, so no buses go there. Our car was the only one on it. It took us five hours, each of us getting out in turn to direct the car, reaching Tang'an, at a speed slower than walking.

Tang'an is nestled in a col east of Zhaoxing, close to the Nongbao Mountain 1,000 m above sea level. There are over 160 households, 800 villagers and more than 100 village houses on stilts, mostly facing south. This old Dong village, according to elderly villagers in the village, has a history of over 700 years. Facing the traces of ancient times — the Drum Tower, the theatre, villagers' houses on stilts, the flagstone road, ancient cemetery, water grinder, pestle for hulling rice... the

world-renowned Norwegian ecological musicology expert John Gjestrum said with feeling, 'Tang'an is an example of humans returning back to nature. Here everything, of the natural and cultural heritage, has been regarded as part of the ecological museum, and any object may become a historical record of how people here lived in the past.'

### Drum Tower — Villagers' Assembly Hall

We stayed at Ying Weiyi's home, where he opened the only hostel in Tang'an Village.

The Drum Tower is visible from the gate of the hotel. As one of the three treasures of a Dong village (Drum Tower, Dage song, and covered wind and rain bridge), the seven-storey Drum Tower,

after an overhaul, stands conspicuously at the centre of the village. In a Dong village, the drum tower is not merely a structure, but an 'assembly hall', where dozens of 'village councillors' — the venerable elderly villagers — assemble to discuss village affairs, big and small, mediate disputes, and mete out punishment for offenders of village rules. Hence the tower has become the bellwether of the village.

### Sasui Worshipped as a Dong Heroine

Tang'an Village has nine exits, each with a gate which is simply built with four wood poles supporting a wooden gate tower. There is also something like a

1. The Drum Tower standing at the centre of the Tang'an Dong Village.
2. Unhusked rice dry in the sun on the villagers' balcony.
3. The covered bridge and rice fields seen from a mountainside.





small gate tower built on top of the Drum Tower, its gate always closed and locked. I didn't notice it at first, but later learned that it is the Altar to Sasui, honouring this Dong Goddess worshipped in all Dong villages. Whenever there is a major activity in the village, the villagers would go to offer sacrifice to the altar, especially during the Spring Festival period — the largest celebrations in Tang'an Village. During this period, all the villagers will gather in front of the altar, while the venerable elderly villagers will enter the altar to offer tea, burn incense sticks to the Goddess and extol her merits and virtues. After the worshipping, the whole village, men and women, old and young, will form a circle and do the Caitangge dance in the Drum Tower square.

#### **"Great Wall Terrace Field"**

#### **Built in 12 Years**

I hiked uphill to see the terrace field in the morning. Terrace fields elsewhere are

mostly made with dirt, but Tang'an's terrace is unique — completely created by laying down stones, with special rules for the work. According to elderly villagers, laying down stones in a terrace field can only be done by one man; too many people would spoil the work. There is also a historical terrace field in Tang'an. In 1878, a 61-year-old necromancer Pan Chuanda was determined to give up his practiced career in order to build a good terrace field for later people. He worked through for 12 years and lived on the mountain, defying all hardships to carry stones up to the mountain before finally completing the reinforced ridge, 150 m long and 5 m high, at the age of 73. Now more than a century has passed but this classic terrace field acclaimed as the 'Great Wall Terrace' is still standing firm up the mountain.

#### **"Sweet" Water from Shipiao Well**

For centuries, Tang'an Village is not only endowed with the 'Three Treasures'

common to all Dong villages, but also the Mother's Well — Shipiao Well. Running down from the Nongbao Mountain, a spring flows into this unique well and its water spouts out from the two sides. The water from Shipiao Well is so 'sweet' that not only Tang'an villagers like it, people from Zhaoxing five km down the mountain also come often to fetch the water. Carrying two buckets on a shoulder pole and facing the well, it is easy to fill up both buckets by simply turning the body slightly to catch the flowing water. Several pools drop down one below the other, designated according to their functions and not to be mixed up. Anyone who breaks the rule will be fined 10 yuan. ☐

*Translated by Ling Yu*

1. Women have to work hard, beating the newly dyed cloth from morning till night.

2. The centuries-old Shipiao Well has a proud history.

3. Unloading a tricycle on a street in Zhaoxing.

4. Zhaoxing also has the same atmosphere of the South China watertowns.



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# Travel Tips

## Guizhou

### Transport

#### By Air:

You can get to Qiandongnan (southeast Guizhou) from the capital city Guiyang, which has scheduled flights to Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, Kaikou, Chengdu, Kunming and other large and medium-sized Chinese cities, as well to Hong Kong, Macao and Bangkok. The Longdongbao Airport in Guiyang is 10 km from the city centre. The airport bus runs every 30 minutes from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm, 10 yuan per ticket. You can go to the airport by taking a bus starting from the downtown area can be boarded near the Guiyang CAAC ticket office where the Zunyi and Qingyun roads cross. Normally 50 yuan is charged for a taxi (including expressway toll).

#### By Train:

Four railway lines — Hunan-Guizhou, Sichuan-Guizhou, Kunming-Guiyang and Guangxi-Guizhou — meet in Guiyang, where there are also trains to large and medium-sized cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Wuhan.

#### By Road:

The Passenger Transportation Centre is located at No. 278 Beijing Road, Guiyang, where buses run from 7 am to 8 pm. Special-route tourist buses head out to Duyun, Dushan, Huangguoshu, Tianxing Bridge, Longgong, Zhijin Cave and Xiangzhigou. Tel: (0851) 650 9810

#### By Taxi:

Taxis in Guiyang seldom use a metre. Within the city, it is usually 10 yuan, but after 10 pm it increases to 12 yuan. For long distances, better strike a bargain with the driver beforehand.

### Accommodation:

Shengfeng Hotel No. 69 Shenqi Road, at a good location on the Science and Technology Street by the Nanming Lake. Tel: (0851) 556 8888

Jinjiang Fresh Flowers Hotel No. 1 South Zhonghua Street, conveniently located at Dashizi, central business area between big shopping malls, with easy access to entertainment. Tel: (0851) 586 7888

Guesthouse of the Guizhou Branch of the People's Bank of China Opposite the Baihua Cinema, 160 yuan / standard room. Tel: (0851) 588 0236 / 588 0234

## Kaili

### Transport

#### By Train:

Trains from Kaili run eastward via Zhenyuan and Yiping to Hunan, and westward to Guiyang, capital city of Guizhou. Fanjingshan Train for tourists from Guiyang to Yiping reaches Kaili in about three hours, 24 yuan per ticket. Trains from Shanghai to Guiyang or Chongqing all pass Kaili in a little over two hours. Trains from Guangzhou to Chengdu and Chongqing all stop at Duyun, Guizhou, where one can change to a bus heading for Kaili.

The Kaili Railway Station is two km north of the downtown area by the Qingshui River, from where buses No. 1 and 2 runs directly to the downtown area. Tel: (0855) 381 3114

#### Reminders:

There is a train ticket office near the Bank of China in Kaili's downtown area.

A small number of trains also stop at Zhenyuan, Shibing and Majing.

#### By Road:

The price for a sleeper berth ticket from Guiyang to Kaili is 55 yuan, and for an air-conditioned bus seat is 35 yuan. You can take a bus from the long-distance bus terminal by the Guiyang Gymnasium.

#### Major bus terminals in Kaili:

**Kaili Bus Station:** Located on the North Wenhua Road in northeastern Kaili, its long-distance buses head for Guiyang, Zhenyuan, Leishan, Taijiang, Rongjiang and Congjiang. Buses depart every 30 minutes and reach Guiyang in 3 hours. Business hours: 8 am~5 pm Tel: (0855) 822 3098

**Qiandongnan Prefectural Passenger Transport Station at Ximache:** This largest passenger transport station in Kaili is opposite the Kaili Normal School for Ethnic Minorities. Buses there



The concluding dragon dance, in which several huge dragons are entwined together, is a highlight.

are mainly dispatched to Guiyang and Quanzhou, with some going to other provinces including Guangdong and Zhejiang. Tel: (0855) 825 1025

**Kaili Municipal Transport Company:** Located on Yongle Road, Kaili, the company mainly handles short-distance passenger buses around Kaili. Tel: (0855) 822 1588

#### By Taxi:

Taxis in Kaili do not use a metre; driving within the city usually will not exceed five yuan. At night it would be 10 yuan.

**Reminders:** Traffic rules in Kaili must be observed strictly by using the crosswalk; otherwise there is a 10 yuan fine.

### Accommodation:

**Qiandongnan Prefectural Government Guest House:** Behind the Dashizi Post Office at the city centre; 100 yuan / double-bed room. Tel: (0855) 823 9688

**Guotai Grand Hotel:** 140 yuan / standard room including breakfast, conveniently located.

## Bala River in Kaili

**Transport:** Take a shuttle bus from downtown Kaili heading directly for Jidao Miao Village by the Bala River. Buses run about 4 times an hour, 7 yuan per ticket. There are other buses passing by the river, but it is better to rent a car (about 200 yuan / day) and visit the places along the river one by one. There is no regular car rental company in Kaili; you can negotiate with the van owners at the County Bus Station or near the Second Shopping Mall, prices vary from 150 to 300 yuan; or consult the owners of local restaurants and hostels.

**Admission:** Tickets for villages along the Bala River are usually 20 yuan. A farmer's meal for 10 people is 150 yuan (Nonhua Village).

#### Accommodation:

## Shiqiao Village in Danzhai County

**Transport:** A bus runs every 30 minutes from Kaili to Danzhai, where a shuttle bus goes to Shiqiao Village once a day; the trip takes one hour.

**Accommodation:** Stay at the Jiaotong Hotel in Danzhai County town, 100 yuan / standard room.

## Kala Village in Danzhai County

**Transport:** It takes half an hour's drive to cover the 8 km from Danzhai County town to Kala Village. Or you can also take a tricycle to the village.

**Accommodation:** Stay in Danzhai County town.

## Xijiang Miao Village in Leishan County

**Transport:** Buses depart four times a day from Kaili to Xijiang, twice in the morning and once at noon, taking three hours. You may get out to tour the Langde Village midway. Besides, you can also take a southbound van to Leishan and Xijiang at the Jinjing River Bridge head on South Shaoshan Road, Kaili.



#### Accommodation:

**Youjia Hostel** The best in the town of Xijiang, across the street from the Lusheng Square of the pedestrian street, and the only place with a standard room (120 yuan) in Xijiang. 50 yuan for both double-bed and single-bed rooms, with shared toilets, a burner and access to the Internet. Tel: (0855) 334 8896 / 135 9553 5536.

**Mr. Li's Hostel** From this hostel half way up the hill, you can have a panoramic picture of this Miao village of over 1,000 families. 15 yuan / person. Tel: (0855) 334 8280 / 334 8147. Besides, the Fengxiang Tower opened by the farmer painter Li Yufu also commands a good view of the whole village. 20 yuan / person; 20 yuan per meal / person. Tel: (0855) 334 8627

#### Reminders:

Taking a bus to the Xijiang Miao Village, you can get off at a place about 500 m from the village, where a roadside pavilion on the slope facing the village is an ideal spot for taking pictures of the whole Xijiang Village. Following a path by the pavilion you can walk to the village. Xijiang is beautiful and very spectacular when viewed from the distance, as the two hilltops are fully covered by houses on stilts.

**Food:** Food in Xijiang Miao Village is special for its sour flavour: chicken stewed in sour soup, sour cabbage, sour pepper, sour tomatoes...

#### Shanmu River in Shiping County

**Transport:** Buses depart at about 8 am from Kaili bus station, and run for 2.5 hours before reaching Shiping. Trains to Shiping stop at the town of Yangliutang, a small station where not many trains stop. There are many tourist information desks and travel agencies in Shiping County town. A round-trip bus to the Shanmu River is about 20 yuan; taking a direct bus to Shanmu River at the bus station gate costs about five yuan.

**Admission:** 120 yuan for rafting on the Shanmu River; 20 yuan for non-rafting season.

**Accommodation:** The 3-star **Sinfeng Hotel** by the beautiful Wuyang River in the county town is right for those expecting good accommodation. The **County Government Guesthouse** and the **Youdian Guesthouse** charge 10-30 yuan / person. Also available are Shanmu River Hotel and Guangming Hotel.



Rafting on the Shanmu River during the water war.

#### Longli Ancient Town in Jinping County

**Transport:** Starting at 6 am the Kaili-Jinping shuttle bus departs 7~8 times a day, for 65 yuan / person. Beware that the road condition in the section from Tianzhu to Jinping on this 5-hour drive is quite poor. Buses from Jinping to Longli run every 40 minutes, 20 yuan / person. It takes more than half a day to fly from Guiyang to the city of Tongren, then go southward to Jinping.

**Admission:** 20 yuan

#### Accommodation:

**Old Town Hotel** Located outside the Qingyang Gate of the Longli Ancient Town, the hotel has fairly good facilities, 80 yuan / room. Tel: (0855) 718 0018 / 136 3855 4888.

There are also many private hostels run by the residents, about 15 yuan / person. You may stay at Jiang Huayuan's home near the South City Gate Tower, as he is knowledgeable about Longli's history.

#### Tang'an Dong Village in Liping County

from Liping County south station to Zhaoxing, covering the distance in 80 minutes. If starting from Guangxi's Sanjiang to Zhaoxing, it takes 4 hours, 20 yuan / person. To go from Zhaoxing to Tang'an, you need to rent a vehicle at Zhaoxing: 40 yuan for a round trip by tricycle; 60 yuan for a round trip in a van. Or you may take buses passing by and get off at Tang'an intersection, then turn right to walk for about 1 km to enter Tang'an. Also, you may walk for about two hours from Zhaoxing along a flagstone path to Tang'an.

Flights are available on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday between Guilin and Liping. After arriving in Liping, change to a bus heading for Zhaoxing and Tang'an.

**Admission:** Presently Tang'an is free for visitors and the Ecological Museum charges 10 yuan.

#### Accommodation:

**Tang'an Hostel** 40 yuan / double-bed room

**Zhaoxing Cultural Centre Guesthouse**

Within the Zhaoxing Cultural Centre. Tel: (0855) 613 0005

Zhaoxing is about six km from Tang'an, on the road to Tang'an. It is a large Dong village with five drum towers (normally a Dong village has only one drum tower) belonging to five clans, named Ren (benevolence), Yi (righteousness), Li (courtesy), Zhi (wisdom) and Xin (trustworthy).

#### Rongjiang

**Transport:** Seven buses run between Rongjiang and Kaili from 7:20 am to 3:20 pm or every 40 minutes. The 5-hour drive costs 60 yuan a person. Renting a van with 7 seats from Xijiang to Rongjiang costs about 450~500 yuan.

#### Accommodation:

**Sheraton Hotel**: Facing the bus station, 100 yuan / standard room

**Rongjiang Hotel**: Inside the County government compound, North Guzhou Road, 100 yuan / standard room

**Rongjiang Blue Sky Hotel**: 70 yuan / standard room, 40 yuan / single room

#### Congjiang

**Transport:** It takes two hours to drive from Congjiang to Rongjiang; 35 yuan / bus ticket, 150 yuan / car rental

#### Accommodation:

**Congjiang County Government Guesthouse** 60 yuan for a 3-bed room, with independent bathroom

**Yueliangshan Hotel** 50 yuan / standard room

There are many family hostels on the street west of the bridge, 20 yuan / person for a 2-bed room



Houses in the Longli Ancient Town.



# In the Footsteps of the *Wild Pandas*



Photos & Article by Pu Tao

My camera began to capture images of giant pandas in the wild many years ago. The movements of these black and white animals make them seem cute and lovely. I have spent many years tracking them in areas of Sichuan Province, visiting 80% of places where giant pandas exist. The result has not only been more than 10,000 photographs, but also my growing affection for them.

My first encounter with the giant panda was in the Minshan Prefecture located east of the Hengduan Mountains, a National Nature Reserve of Sichuan Province. In searching for traces of the giant pandas, I started to live where they live. In summer I went to Baima Yangdong River in Pingwu area. My companions and I based ourselves on the mid-level of a mountain standing 2,300 metres above sea-level and lived in a hut abandoned by a carpenter. Apart from water and wood which nature provided free of charge, all major foods like rice, noodles, oil, salt, vinegar and vegetables had to be purchased in the county market. The horse troupe which carried these foods for us would

only arrive at our base every two or three days. When it came to the rainy season during July and September, landslides demolished highways and bridges blocking the transportation and eventually blocking our food supply. Fortunately, the hospitable and generous Tibetans living in nearby villages dug out some fresh potatoes for us, helping us to survive a whole week of nil food delivery.

## Strategies in Tracking the Wild Giant Pandas

Half a month had passed and we had not seen one giant panda. The local Tibetans told us that they had seen the animal at the back of the

1. Water is especially valuable for the giant panda in a world of snow and ice.

2. Apart from the 14 hours used for hunting food, the giant panda prefers to rest.

mountain where they lived. They said they could silently get close to the animal. Hence, we decided to head to the Huangtuliang wood, a place of higher elevation.

Another 50 days slipped away and all we had seen were footprints of the pandas, never the animals. The mild weather of late September brought less rain and more sunshine and was an optimum for outdoor activities. We changed our strategy accordingly and explored an area with less dense wood to broaden our view. That was proved to be more successful as we noticed a few bamboo areas nibbled by pandas, as well as fresh droppings. We could smell them very close to us and that was encouraging news.

One October morning, we noticed some bamboo within 50 metres of us shaking and could hear the noise of bamboo being chewed. The pandas were here! Our local guide said that we could quietly approach the pandas when they were eating. As the animal is highly sensitive, we tried to approach it upwind from two directions. After a few steps, the bamboo stopped shaking but then something started to move away from us, leaving apart the bamboo wood in a line. We followed the line until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, at the end of the woods we saw what we'd been dreaming of for more than 60 days — a giant panda. Relaxing on the tree branches, she had her chin resting on her two front paws whilst a rear leg dangled freely in the air. Hearing the click of our camera shutters, she kept her eyes focused to our direction, as if saying, 'It's fine to take photos of me, just don't hurt me!' I changed angles slightly and captured more images for about two minutes. Then our target jumped down unexpectedly and disappeared in the wood. We congratulated each other with great excitement.

### Rolling Pandas on Snow-capped Slopes

In late December of the same year, five of us headed to Yangdong River again. The weather was especially cold, with the mountain covered by snow a half-metre deep. Even the river was frozen. Such an environment not only caused inconvenience for the giant panda seeking food and drink but it also increased the difficulty for us to find their tracks. 20 more days passed and we eventually discovered their footprints on a snowy riverbank, probably left there when the panda went to drink water. We immediately rushed to the riverside and found a pit. The ice had melted slightly due to the sunshine, exposing the crystal-clear running water underneath. In order to hide easily, only two of us were planned to stay and wait for the panda.

She finally appeared far away and took four hours to walk a distance of just 300 metres! A panda is strongest when descending a slope yet this talent is gone in snow. After a careless slip, the animal could hardly get up again. When she finally reached the riverside, I kept taking pictures until I had finished two rolls of film. Only upon bidding farewell to her did I notice the cold; my body was partly immersed in the icy water. However, it was worth capturing the beautiful grace and posture of the panda. 

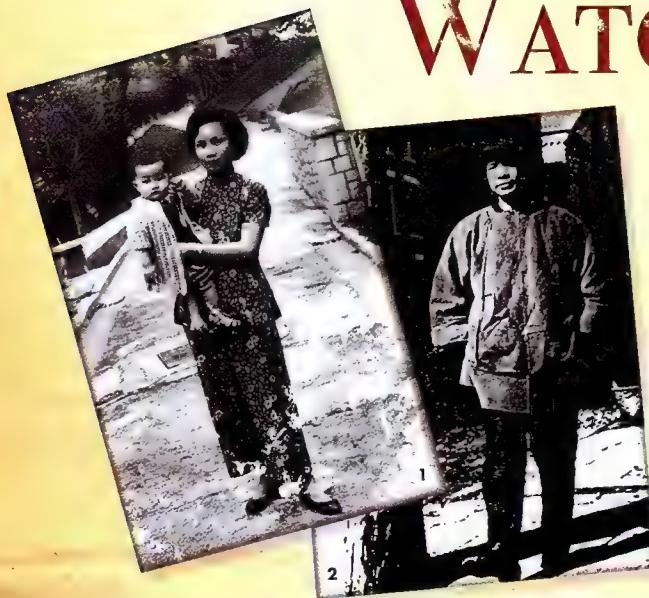
3. No difficulty to turnover. Even with a huge body the Panda is quite agile.

4. The Giant Panda is said to be a 'living fossil' as the species has survived through the evolution process for over eight million years.

Translated by Y.Rouge



# THE STORY BEHIND THE KAIPING WATCHTOWERS



Photos courtesy of Tan Jinhua Article by Tan Jinhua

The 'Kaiping Watchtower Buildings and Village' in Guangdong Province was added to the World Cultural Heritage list by the UN heritage organisation on June 28, 2007. Since then the site has attracted a lot of visitors. However, you may not appreciate its uniqueness and value, if you know nothing about its history, the background of the owners, and the formation and character of overseas Chinese culture, which cannot be told by its appearance alone.

Many visitors do not understand why the 'Kaiping Watchtowers and village' would be granted World Cultural Heritage listing. After all, why would these fairly ordinary country-style buildings with just a short history be accepted by

heritage experts as worthy of this listing? In fact, the site's background and cultural significance, as well as its excellent environmental ecological condition are the reasons.

I have heard many stories about these buildings





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and have seen them change since I spent my childhood this neighbourhood, so I became more and more interested in them as I grew up. To me, these buildings exuded strength. The buildings standing in the village for several dozen years prevented the villagers suffering from harassment by bandits and Japanese invaders. You might be struck by a complex and heavy feeling when listening to the explanation of the local people, smelling the humidity in the emptiness, and seeing the dimly visible characters and paintings on the door lintel and the traces of rain on the mossy walls. Each of the enchanting and wonderful watchtowers represents the painstaking effort of its owner and has its own painful story.

The majority of the owners of the watchtowers are living abroad and seldom come back to their hometown, so not much about their life in those years is known. In order to learn more about these buildings, I started a journey of searching for the owners of the buildings in North America in the end of 2002. I had little money but great curiosity. I visited the settlements of Chinese immigrants of the early years in about ten states of the United States in a year. In recent years, I tried hard to trace the owners of the buildings in Hong Kong, Macao, New Zealand and Australia.

### Origins of the Watchtower Houses

The building of the watchtower houses reached its height at the end of the Qing Dynasty

(1636—1911) and early days of the Republic of China (1912—1949), which was closely related to the history of overseas Chinese, or we could say that these buildings were the product of the anti-overseas Chinese movement launched in North America and Australia. The watchtower houses were first built in Kaiping at the end of the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644) and early period of the Qing Dynasty. They were built for both historical and social reasons.

Kaiping is located among Xinhui, Taishan, Enping and Xinxing counties and it suffered from unrest during the Ming Dynasty, because it was under the jurisdiction of none of these counties. Kaiping County was established in 1649, with the literal meaning of 'peaceful', expressing the local people's wishes. Since Kaiping was situated in low-lying land, it often suffered from floods when there were sea tides and rainstorms. Therefore, the people of Kaiping began to build watchtower buildings to prevent flooding and guard against theft and burglary.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the early days of the Republic of China, the building of watchtower houses came to a peak, because turbulence and robbers were wild in Guangdong Province. Therefore, the residents who were working abroad, tried to guard their families against theft by building watchtowers. More than 1,000 buildings had already been built in the county in 1928, and most of them were built

1. It is not easy for a family reunion since the husband is working abroad, leaving his wife and children at home.

2. A lonely foreigner in New York.

3. There are many emotional stories about the watchtowers. Shown here is Yiyunlou Building.

4. Chinese labourers going to foreign countries by Sheung Wan port in Hong Kong, 1900.



by overseas Chinese in the United States and Canada. The extant buildings were mainly built from 1910 to 1930.

### Seeking Their Fortunes Abroad

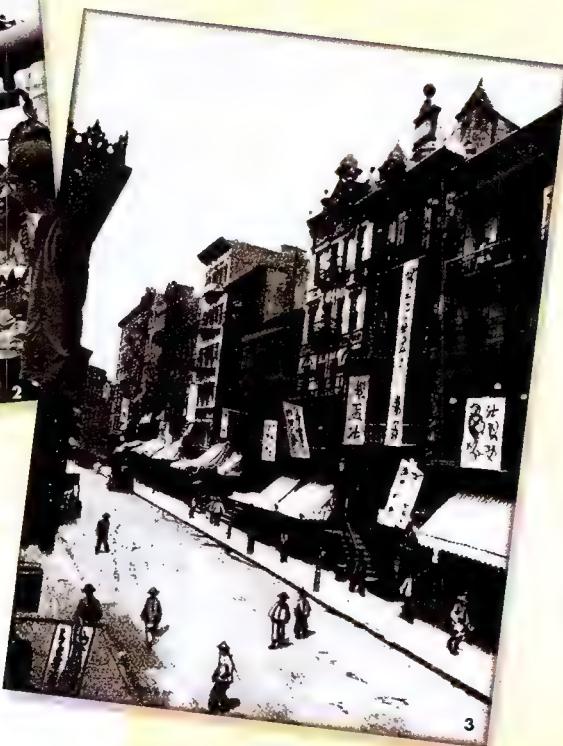
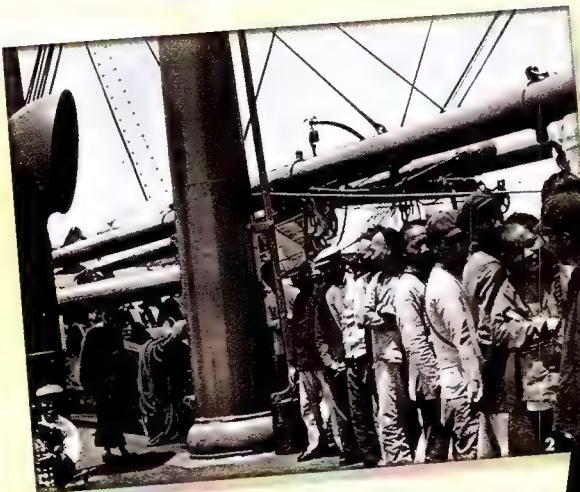
The Opium War launched by Britain in 1840, brought intense suffering to the Chinese people, especially those in Guangdong, where drugs were allowed and spread widely and the society was in turmoil. In addition, the tax policy of the Qing government led to the rapid increase of the population in some places, which intensified their woes, with more people in less arable land, so it was hit by a grain shortage and a surplus of labourers. The 12-year fighting between the native and guest families also brought great suffering for locals, breaking up many families. The Taiping Rebellion (1850—1864) and the local Red Scarf Uprisings added more misery to local peasants' lives. After the Second Opium War (1856—1860), the Qing government was compelled to sign the treaty of the Convention of Peking (Beijing) in 1860 that Britain and France could make use of the ports of China and recruit Chinese labourers to work in foreign countries. As a result, European and American ships came to the Asian continent frequently, providing the chance for the Chinese people to see the outside world. Foreign capitalists coveted not only China's land, but also its 400

million labourers.

The political turbulence and economic depression of the country and the arrest of rebels of the Red Scarf Uprisings by the Qing government drove people to the brink of desperation, so work abroad seemed to be the only way to escape from the chaotic situation for the young people. Historical records say that Xie Shede from Shantang Village, Nanping Township was the first Kaiping person to go to the United States in 1839 working as a coolie. The discovery of the gold mines and the building of the railway in the United States made more people go abroad for a better future.

It was a miserable page in the history of immigration of the local people for them to be sold abroad like 'piglets'. The ships transported the Chinese labourers were called 'piglet ships' and wooden basins were used to hold food for the labourers. At mealtimes, the head labourer gathered up people in the way like feeding pigs, hence were disparately titled as 'piglet labourers'. Most of them were shanghaied to sign a contract with a period of five to eight years, and were sold to the employers at the foreign port. There was no freedom for them and their living conditions were very bad.

It was just at the time Chinese peasants were trying to find a way out that the developing world



required a great number of labourers. Therefore, it seemed that the peasants saw hope for their life at hearing the extravagantly colourful descriptions of these far-off lands and they thought they would be in heaven once abroad. The advertisements said, 'American people are very rich and Chinese people are welcome to work in the United States. They can get a good salary and live in a spacious house. Speaking of eating and clothing, you may choose whatever you like. You can also write to your family, relatives and friends at any time and letters and money are guaranteed to reach the hands of receivers. It is a wonderful place without officials and soldiers and everyone is equal. Many Chinese people are there now, so you will not feel like a stranger. At the same time, there are Chinese people in charge of money matters and offices for recruiting, so you do not have to worry and you

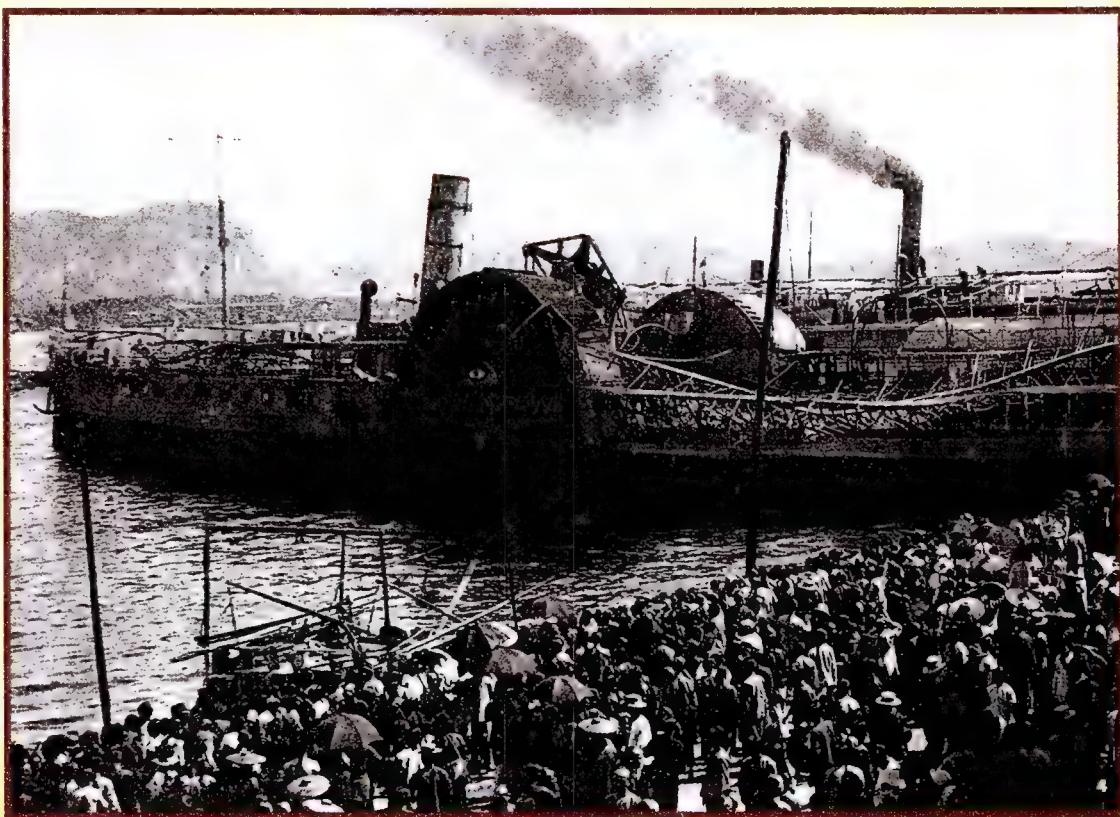
will have good luck being there. The United States has a lot of money you can spend at your will.' Tempted by the vivid descriptions, many Chinese labourers became 'credit labourers'. It seemed that in some sense they were much better than those 'piglet Chinese labourers'. When they arrived at Hong Kong, they were generally received by mass organisations, staying in inns specially arranged for them.

1. Many Chinese labourers were sold to foreign countries like piglets in the 1890s.

2. This is the ship Chinese labourers took to foreign countries in those years in order to make a living.

3. Chinatown of New York in 1900.

4. Chinese labourers were taking 'piglet ship' to the United States via Hong Kong.



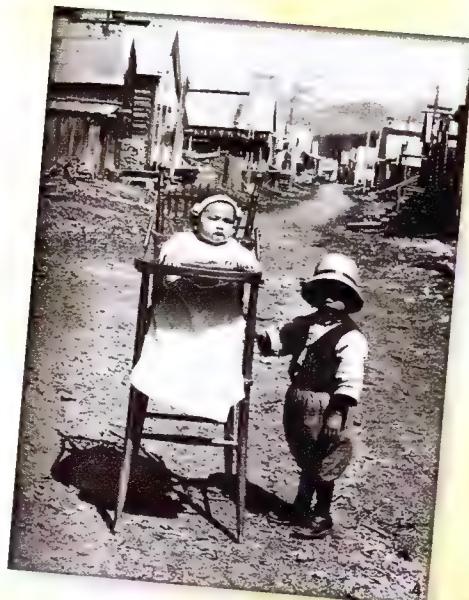
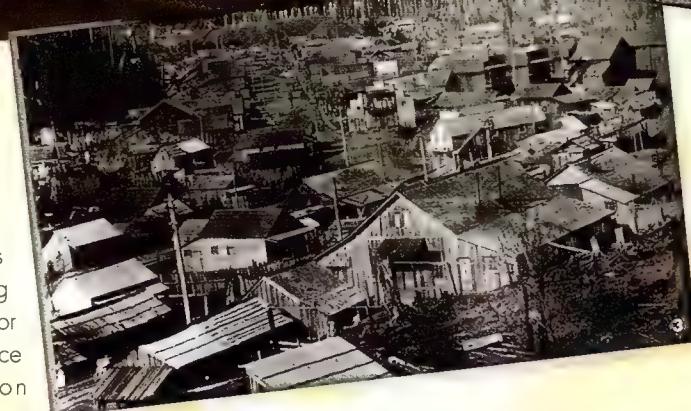


1. A lot of Chinese labourers engaged in dangerous mining.
2. Chinese labourers building the railway in Canada.
3. Area inhabited by Chinese people in the early days.
4. Children of Chinese miners.
5. Stores run by Chinese people in the early days are still remained.
6. Immigration files were burnt in San Francisco in 1906 in the earthquake, so many Chinese took advantage of the situation in order to obtain qualification for their children coming to the US. Therefore, they were interrogated on Angel Island.

### Discrimination against Overseas Chinese

Most of the Chinese labourers going to the United States in those early days worked in mines, building railways, on farms, fish farms or as servants and their performance left a good impression on Americans. The California government was deeply grateful for the contributions made by them. John McDougal, the governor of California at that time once said that among the people who had newly received citizenship, the overseas Chinese had made most outstanding contribution. Moreover, he proposed a suggestion in 1852 to let the overseas Chinese be granted some land so as to encourage more Chinese to settle down in California. Mark Twain, a famous American writer, appraised the Chinese labourers as 'calm, self-possessed and submissive and never got alcoholic'. You seldom saw Chinese labourers violating established practice and being lazy in work. In the first few years, the Chinese labourers in California were really well received and some of them earned some money. However, the good situation did not last long. From 1852, some owners of small mines began to spread rumours against overseas Chinese. Owing to the pressure, the California government issued some unfavourable regulations to Chinese labourers. For example, all foreign mine owners had to pay US\$20 for a permit (it was reduced to US\$3 later on), and each Chinese labourer had to pay US\$6 for a permit. The purpose of the practice of those measures was to drive the 'barbarous Chinese people' away. From then on violent conflicts never stopped between mine owners and Chinese labourers who were harassed by heavy taxes, slaughtering and so on.

Those Chinese labourers building railways in



the United States also had miserable experiences. West Pacific Railroad hired more than 23,004 Chinese labourers to build the hardest section of the railway by going through the Nevada Mountains. Lee Chew, who worked as a railway builder in 1903, recalled that the Chinese labourers were persecuted not because they had shortcomings but just for their traditional virtues. Nevertheless, employers preferred to hire Chinese labourers rather than those from Ireland, Germany, Britain or Italy, because the Chinese labourers were honest, industrious and worked hard.

Besides, Chinese labourers worked longer hours, but took less pay than white labourers. Moreover, they were always assigned to work in the most dangerous section with bad conditions, so innumerable Chinese labourers died in the construction of the railway. According to the report of a newspaper in Sacramento, California on June 30, 1870, a reporter witnessed a cart filled with the corpses of Chinese labourers collected along the railway, about 1,200 dead bodies.

Though a lot of people knew that Chinese people had made great contributions in building the railways, the Chinese labourers were still cheated by every possible means by Central Pacific Railroad.

In the meeting to celebrate the joining of the west and east railways held in Utah State no Chinese labourers presented at the meeting, which was a carefully hatched plot. At the same time no Chinese labourers could be seen in any pictures with historical significance. As soon as the project was finished, Chinese labourers were immediately dismissed by the company, and they did not even get their severance pay, which the company had promised.

The discrimination against the Chinese labourers actually meant political, cultural and



racial discrimination. The United States was in a period of economic recession, and Americans blamed that on Chinese people and criticised them. They complained about Chinese labourers snatching their jobs and earning money from the country for families in China instead of consuming locally. Some politicians even smeared Chinese people as 'monsters' with yellow skin and almond eyes, in order to gain votes in the election. In reports to the National Assembly, they complained about prostitution, crimes and surplus labourers





1. San Francisco's Angel Island.

2. Chinese people were inspected and interrogated like prisoners when entering the US.

3. The Americans did not eat asparagus at first, but now it has become one of their main vegetables since Chinese people began to plant it there.

4. Chinese labourers suffered a variety of discrimination from local people.

5. The anti-Chinese riot.

6. Deng Wendian, when he was only 13 years old, he was first repatriated to Angel Island of San Francisco.

7. Deng Wendian's wedding photo when he was 20 years old. He went back to the US and was interrogated once more by the immigration department.

8. I interviewed 70-year-old Deng Wendian twice in 2003 and 2004.



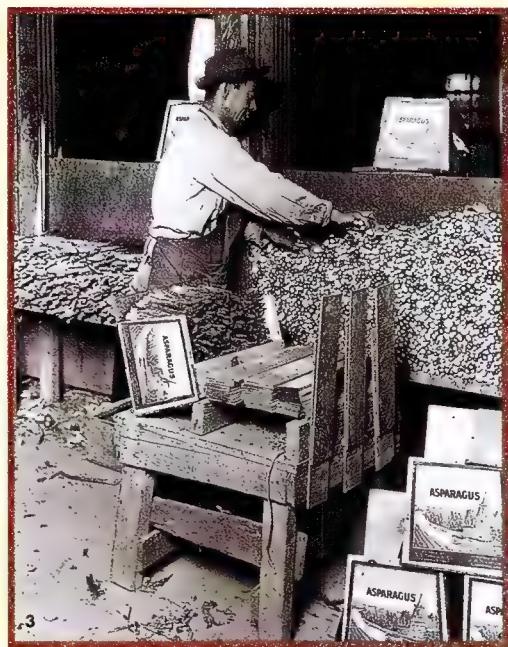
in Chinatown and that Chinese people had no intention of entering the mainstream of the society.

The existence of Chinese traditional culture in Chinatown became the target of the anti-Chinese policy by politicians. They considered the traditional Chinese culture as uncivilised, backward and stubborn, which could not be assimilated with American society and thought that Chinese labourers had no desire to make progress and improve themselves, which threatened the

American culture. Therefore, it seemed that the only way for self-preservation was to adopt policies against overseas Chinese. As a result the 'Chinese Exclusion Act' was passed in 1882, which prompted anti-Chinese riot in America. Then Canada and Australia also adopted some immigration regulations, such as a poll tax, to restrict the entrance of Chinese labourers. The practice of those policies in fact isolated overseas Chinese from the outside world, leading to the abnormal development of Chinatown culture.

### Angel Island and 'Paper Son'

After the adoption of the 'Chinese Exclusion Act' in the United States and 'Act on Chinese Immigrants' in Canada only businessmen, religious persons, diplomats, teachers, and students were permitted to enter their countries, not Chinese labourers. The big fire caused by an earthquake in San Francisco in 1906, burnt out the files of immigrants in the Immigration Bureau of California. Many Chinese labourers took advantage to make false reports about their residency in order to bring their children to the United States. When those people returned to the United States from their hometowns, they claimed to have had newborn babies during their stay in China. As a result, the illegal trading of false birth certificates was practiced; that phenomenon also appeared in

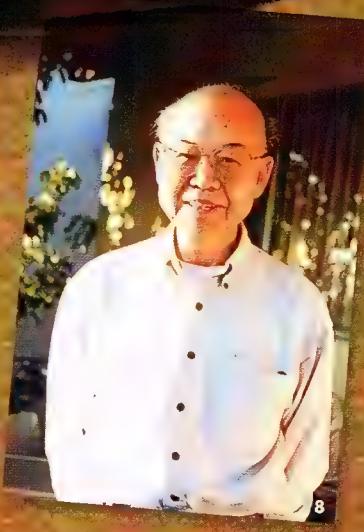
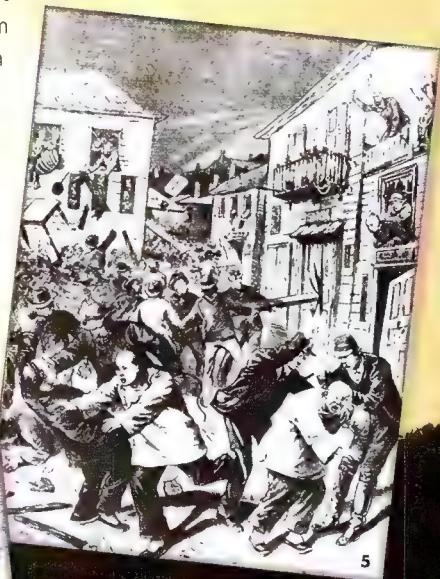


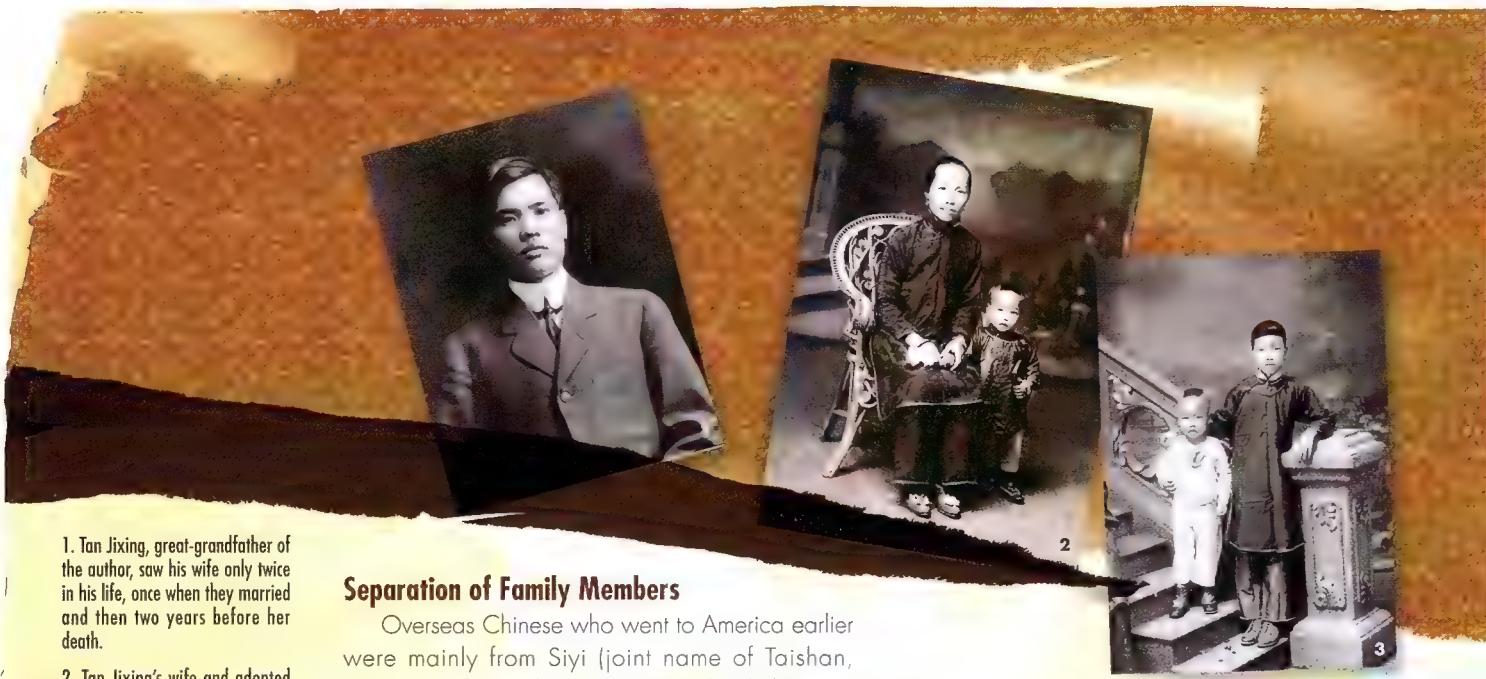
Canada.

The American authorities set up an immigration office in Angel Island, San Francisco, 1910, to examine and check the identities of Chinese entering the country from its west. During 1910—1940, when the Immigration Office was dismantled, about 175,000 Chinese were examined and interrogated like prisoners by the office. In order to give a smooth reply in the interrogation people who had the false identification, one had to bear in mind the references such as family background, location and other things offered by the

sellers. Those materials were generally called 'testimony paper'. The examination lasted anywhere between two weeks to two years, or even several years. In the case of failing to pass the investigation, one might be repatriated to China. Many Chinese people committed suicide because they worried about being sent back to China.

Deng Wendian, now living in San Francisco, was interrogated twice. When he was 13, his father applied for a visa to the United States for him. When he arrived in San Francisco, he was stranded on Angel Island and sent back to Hong Kong, since he was too young to express himself well. He did not bring any money with him and was a stranger in an alien land. He had to beg for food on his way home from Hong Kong. After more than a month-long arduous journey, he finally got home to Chikan, Kaiping. His mother opened the door for him but could hardly recognise him and thought he was a beggar. In his 20, 20 days after his wedding, his father asked him to take another attempted journey to the United States, so he left his wife and took the journey.





1. Tan Jinxing, great-grandfather of the author, saw his wife only twice in his life, once when they married and then two years before her death.

2. Tan Jinxing's wife and adopted son.

3. The daughter and son of Tan Jinxing; he had never seen them in his life.

4. Early days in Chinatown, Los Angeles.

5. Chinese labourers finally came out of the abyss of misery. The famous old shop — Guangyuansheng in Chinatown, New York was the office of Tan Xingru who donated a car to the Chinese Embassy in the US, the first one for the embassy, which won the inscription of Liang Lianfang, ambassador of that time.

6. Tan Huaqiang (second from left) taken in New York in 1937.

7. Since their wives and children could not come to stay with them, Chinatown became the only place for the men to kill time.

## Separation of Family Members

Overseas Chinese who went to America earlier were mainly from Siyi (joint name of Taishan, Kaiping, Xinhui and Enping) so Siyi the dialect was used as a common language. The development of agricultural production of California was closely related to the contributions made by people from Siyi who built dams, opened up wasteland and improved the soil to plant vegetables, such as asparagus. Contributions made by those overseas Chinese were too many to list in detail, such as the construction of the railway running through from the United States to Canada and connecting the west and east of the United States which promoted the rapid development of its economy and laid a solid foundation for it to become a strong and powerful country on the world stage.

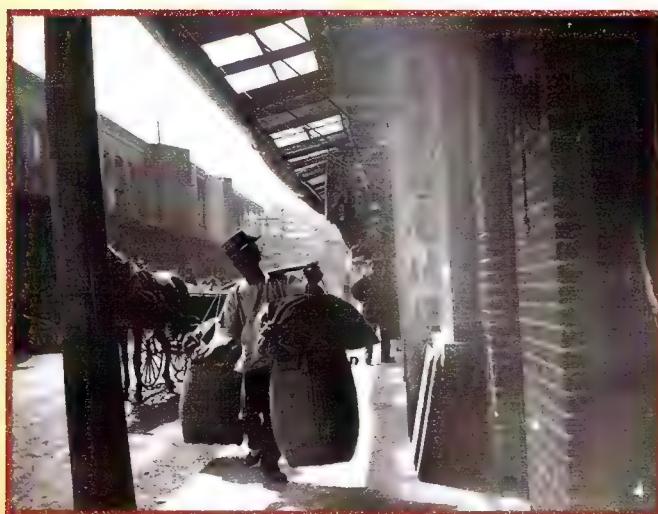
The Chinese labourers of the 1870s reclaimed a large area of wasteland in the western part of the United States by using Chinese farm technologies, digging channels and improving irrigation systems, making California the most developed state in agriculture today.

Chinese labourers created a lot of wealth

through their hard work, but it ended up that they could not earn enough money to pay their tickets to return home and many were reduced to penury. Many of them could not go back to their longed-for country and died overseas. A lot of couples were separated for years. About 86% of the families in Xitang Village, Shangdong Township of Baihe Town had old Jinshan (local people called the US 'Jinshan', literally means golden hill) married women who lived by themselves away from their husbands for their whole life.

A typical case is Tan Jinxing (1887—1976), my great-grandfather. He saw his wife, Yu Huaichun (1887—1961) only twice, once when they married and once two years before his wife passed away.

Arranged by the parents, Tan Jinxing married Yu Huaichun in 1904. Soon after the wedding, Huaichun fell pregnant and Tan Jinxing went to Montreal in Canada together with his fellow villagers to work in a washhouse. The following year, Huaichun gave birth to a baby girl, named Qinxiu. In 1915, they adopted a son from Xinhui, named Bojian. Their daughter, Qinxiu also got married to an overseas Chinese. During the period of the Anti-Japanese War, the whole family was suffering from starvation, since foreign currency could not be used due to economic depression. After the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, Qinxiu was pleased to know the foreign currency could be used again, so she bought a lot of food. However, she died of intestines ulcerated by gluttony. Tan Jinxing's business was bad in Canada, so he could not save enough money to go home until 1959. The last time he saw his wife was in Hong Kong 1961, as Huaichun was dying. Tan Jinxing had never seen his adopted son in his life. He planned to go back home in 1976 when he was 90 years old, but he hesitated because of the Cultural



Revolution (1966–1976). Finally, he died in Hong Kong.

I unexpectedly got some pictures left by Tan Jixing when I was studying abroad in the United States 2003. There was a picture of my great-grandmother, 3-year old grandfather and 13-year old grandaunt, taken in their hometown Dihai in 1917. Tan Jixing's washhouse, which also served as his bedroom, was a great mess piled with washed and unwashed clothes, but these pictures were covered neatly by an envelope hidden under his mattress, as his treasure.

### Times in Chinatown

The Chinese labourers staying in the other countries lived closely together as a community; as a result Chinatowns were formed in these countries. There were two reasons for the formation. On one hand, the Chinese labourers were discriminated against politically and culturally and were restricted by various regulations of those countries, so the sphere of their activities was limited. On the other hand, by living together they coped with the problems due to the differences of the culture, language, customs, and religion between the two countries.

In order to promote the affection of the fellow villagers, various offices, guilds or halls were set up where they could feel at home.

Almost all the restaurants, groceries, drug stores and washhouses run by Chinese in America were small-scale family stores. Sometimes close relatives

were hired. The imbalance of men and women in Chinatown made it a male society, so gambling houses, brothels and opium dens were set up in order to let those Chinese labourers relax and kill time.

In fact some overseas Chinese were lucky that they earned enough money to come back home to see their family members and have new houses built. However, a lot of them lived a hard life abroad, losing their job, being discriminated







experience in New York, that as soon as he arrived there, he rented a room together with his fellow villagers and relatives. Generally six to ten people stayed in one room with US\$2 each person a month. They all felt exhausted after working the whole day in the washhouse or restaurant. Many people got nothing to do other than went gambling on their day off, but he rather went to buy viscera of pigs to cook a big meal for himself; it was cheap as no Americans wanted, but delicious. He got married at 20 in his hometown and then left home for the US. He did not see his wife until they gathered up in the United States 30 years when he was 50.

During my interview, Guan Nengxun grasped the hands of his wife from time to time, and said that he treasured the reunion very much. He worked hard in obscurity all his life in Chinatown and never offended white people or stirred up trouble. In his old age he worked for the overseas Chinese community. Though his life was prosaic, he had no regrets at all.

### Summary

The stories of separating couples are very touching, making up another page of the history of Kaiping. These watchtower houses are more than 50 years old, and now they are empty and surrounded by tall banyan trees and dense bamboo. What we see are the desolate doorways and courtyards, which are covered by thick moss. The dimly visible couplets and paintings on the doors tell the past stories of the owners. The swallows living under the roofs are the permanent guests of these empty buildings. Though I feel a little sad, I like to stand among the buildings to read their history. Meanwhile, it is a matter for rejoicing that these buildings are preserved intact.

Translated by Wang Zengfen

1. Chen Chengyi in the 1880s. She was the first woman to support the democratic revolution sponsored by Sun Yat-sen. Her husband was assassinated in Chinatown and then she took over the business of his drug store.

2. The person cut out from the picture is the father who died abroad. According to the local custom, dead people should not be in the same picture as living people.

3. Liuye House of Tan Huaqiang in Chikan in 1947.

against, feeling lonely and suffering great pressure by asking for money from home. The fellow villagers only saw the resplendent exterior of those buildings built in their hometowns but not the hardships they suffered in the strange lands.

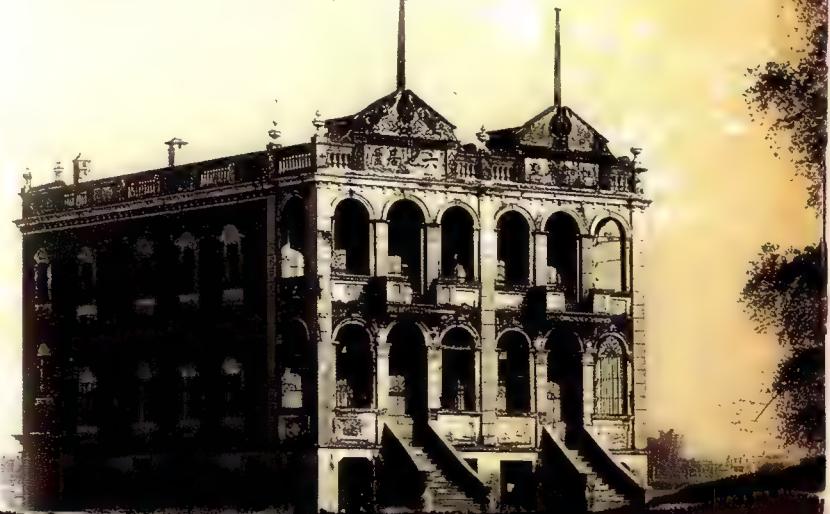
Tan Huaqiang had his Liuye House built at his home, Chikan in 1930 and then went to the United States again, but he could not find a job when he stayed in Chinatown for half a year because of the economic recession. His diary written in 1935 revealed his helplessness between the lines. He wrote on February 26 in his diary, 'When a distant relative got married, I declined the invitation for the banquet by the excuse of shabby clothes. Sigh, I believe that one would not like to go out when he is poor.'

'4 April (meaning rainy season begins) is the day for Chinese people to pay respect to a dead person at his tomb. On every festive occasion one will think all the more of his or her dear ones far away. Moreover, they stay in other countries living a life of hunger and cold; one day seems like a year for them, so they long for a bright day so much.'

Family members of Tan Huaqiang in China did not understand how hard life was for him oversea, that his wife and children thought he earned a lot of money there and often wrote letters to ask for money. On September 1941 his son, Tan Guotie, wrote a letter to his father, 'This term I need at least 500 yuan since various charges have gone up. In addition, the family expenses are also numerous, but we only received 300 Hong Kong dollars this year, about a thousand silver dollars which is far from enough.'

Of course some of them were lucky, because they found jobs and earned some money. Though jobs were tough, it was better than being jobless.

Guan Nengxun, 87 years old, recalled his





# Shandong

## *The Spirit of Sports*

Photos & Article by Cindy Lam

As the world waits for the opening of the Olympics, I chose to rush to one of the hot spots in China—Shandong Province.

Shandong is not only the birthplace of football, it has also been chosen to host the 2008 Olympic Sailing events. I tour around the province, reaching all the wonderful places—Jinan, Mt. Taishan, Qufu, Zibo, Qingdao, and discover the passion and spirit of the region. Shandong shows that China is ready for the big games.

## Suggested Route

- D1 Arrive at Jinan Airport (whether you are arriving from Shenzhen or Hong Kong, most of the flights arrive at dusk).
- D2 Visit Red Leaf Mount in the morning, return to Jinan city for lunch, and then tour Daming Lake and Baotu Spring Park, take the train to Mount Taishan before 3:30 pm, but note that the cable car closes at 5:30 pm, stay at Mount Taishan.
- D3 Watch the sunrise from Mount Taishan, then head for Jade Emperor Peak and take a tour of Dai Temple, go to Qufu in the afternoon and visit the three Confucian sites (mansion, temple and tomb), overnight on train.
- D4 Arrive Zibo early morning and visit Zhou Village. Leave by car via the Jiqing highway after lunch. Bypass the Ancient Vehicle museum and arrive Qingdao at dusk, dig for clams at trestle after dinner.
- D5 Visit the St. Louis Cathedral and the Qingdao Brewery, then lunch at Golden Hans, arrives at the Aofansai base Fushan Bay, depart from the airport at dusk.



1. The Aofansai base's long seashore porch not only is an auditorium, but also has flags setting and the windmill electricity generator.

2. Daming Lake has the reputation of being 'the Quancheng Pearl'; it also has willow trees on the lakeside.

### Jinan with Hot Spring Water and Fiery Red Leaf

People in the old days said that Jinan was a place of smiles in the winter. It is also said that the water here, not only does not freeze, but also has a dazzling heat.

Jinan, also named Chuncheng (City of Springs), has more than 700 natural springs with spring water gushing from underground. It must be very warm when the spring water converges

with Daming Lake; no wonder the lake does not ice over. In the winter, Daming Lake's average temperature is above ten degrees. We rode on the sightseeing boat and went across with the local fishing boat. The splash was warm compared with the water in my drink bottle.

After feeling 'a bit of warmth' from the Daming lake water, we then arrived to feel the hot mist from the spring water. Baotu Spring Park has the reputation of being 'No.1 under the Heaven'. The park has weeping willows, the tree of Jinan City. The steamy mist can only be seen in winter, because the constant temperature of Jinan Spring water is 18 degrees, only in winter can the spring water be hotter than air. As it rushes out and meets cold air, steam is created.

### Mount Taishan Alive with Incense and Candles

There is a ten degree temperature difference between Mount Taishan and the ground. I have put on a thick coat to ride the cable car, before I reach Nantianmen. Mount Taishan is a spiritual mountain; it is the first mountain to see the earliest sunrise among the 'China's Five Great Mountains', therefore all emperors from the previous dynasties would come here to conduct the ancient rite of making sacrifices to heaven. Today, many Chinese still go up the mountain on foot, the walk taking at least one day. I could see many disabled or aged people, coming up gradually with the help of their family members; that really displays their sincerity.

After departing the peak of Mount Taishan, I returned to have a look at Dai temple at the foot





of the mountain; it is peaceful and quiet compared with crowded Mount Taishan. This is where the emperor held the ancient rite of making sacrifices; it has a main hall and a copper pavilion inside, but it was the cypress which took my attention most. The old cypress has always been regarded as the tree of god. People who come to Dai temple would touch the tree for wishes, also hoping for a long and happy life.

### Qufu Passing Down the Tradition

Qufu is one of the three biggest holy cities in the world (the other two are Mecca and Jerusalem); not only does it consist of the three 'Kongs' (Kong

is the last name of Confucius) — Confucian temple, the Kong Family Mansion, and the Cemetery of Confucius, but also of the descendants of Confucius, constituting one-fifth of the population. And all the non-Kongs respect them very much; for example, every company would hire at least one Kong person, or whenever they hold a Confucius' Family's Residence Banquet, they must invite one Kong person to attend. Tourists come to Qufu to look at the three Kongs, to venerate the spirit of Confucius, but from what I have seen, the respect that local people have towards Kong's family is already shown in their daily life. They have passed down this tradition, not only in spirit, but also in practice.

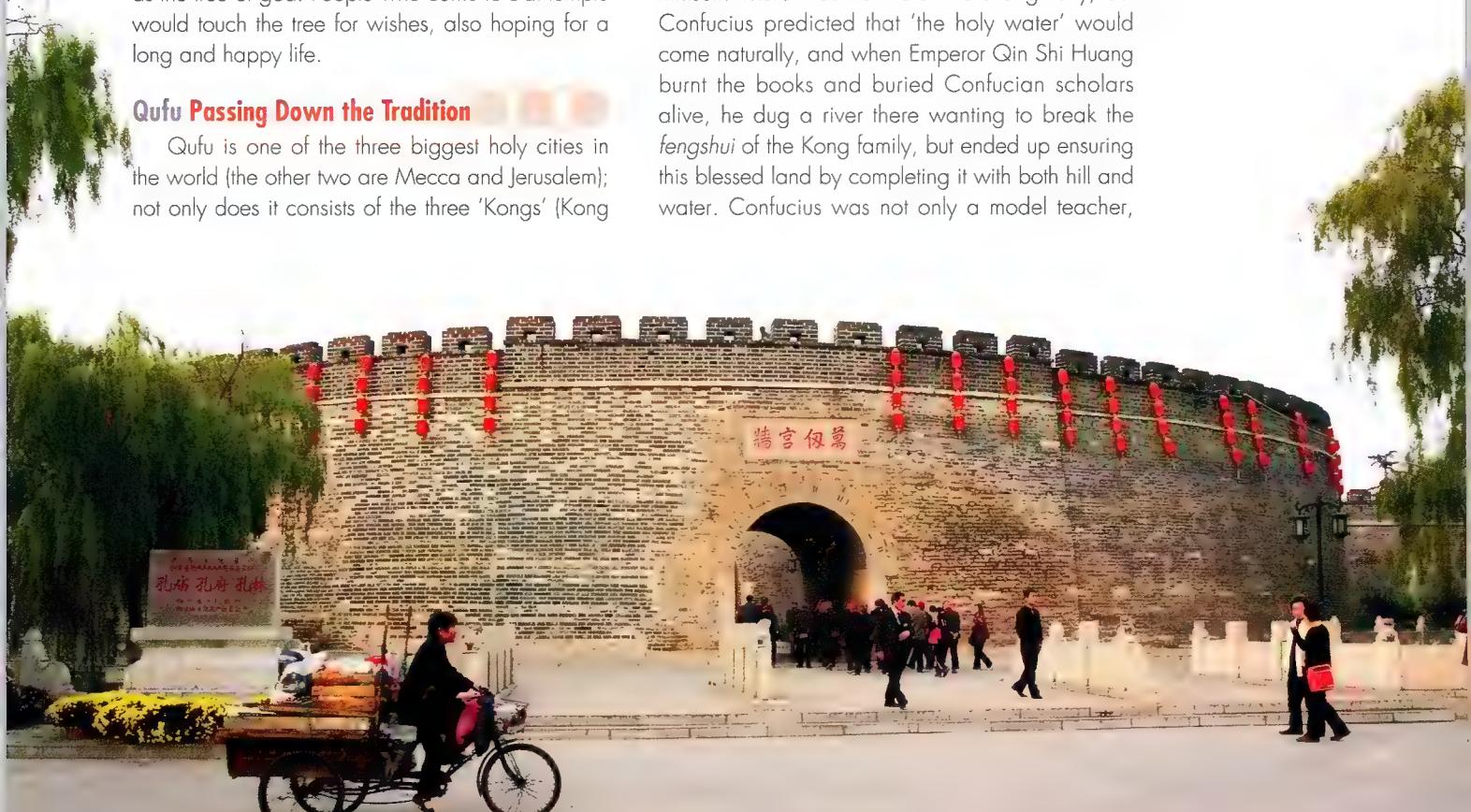
The Confucian temple and the Kong Family Mansion are situated in the same area, and entering the area through the town wall is like entering another space. The layout of the Confucian temple's Dachengdian Palace is the same as the Beijing's Forbidden City's Taihedian Palace, both representing civilisation — one being spiritual civilisation, while the other is political. The construction of the Kong Family Mansion is a typical combination of the government office and the inner mansion. And the Cemetery of Confucius is 70 kilometres away from the Confucian temple; it is the biggest family cemetery in the world and the biggest artificial park in China. This fengshui cemetery was chosen by Confucius for his son himself. There was no water there originally, but Confucius predicted that 'the holy water' would come naturally, and when Emperor Qin Shi Huang burnt the books and buried Confucian scholars alive, he dug a river there wanting to break the fengshui of the Kong family, but ended up ensuring this blessed land by completing it with both hill and water. Confucius was not only a model teacher,

1. Zhou Village — Han Pier still has many old shops running along both sides of the main street.

2. The Confucian temple and the Kong Family Mansion are surrounded by brick walls, encompassing the dignity of the holy city.

3. Athletes practise sailing on the Qingdao Fushan Bay.

4. This batch of mortuary carriages and horses were found during the construction of the Jinan expressway. The historical site is now lying under the expressway.





but also a prophet; everything here represents and proves his legend.

### Zibo A Living Museum

Zibo is the former capital of Qi (another country during the Spring and Autumn Period); the history museum of Country Qi is also constructed here. It has been well known nationally as a trade centre since the Ming dynasty and Zhou Village is also located in Zibo. It was opened up as a commercial port during the Qing Dynasty; it was also named 'Han (Dry) Port', meaning it is as busy as a port

despite it is not by the sea, so you can imagine how thriving the trade activity here once was. At present, silk shops, silver shops, the main street, etc, still stood, and the silk trade is still flourishing as before. Not only does it have some exhibition halls, such as the big dye house, bank, etc, it also has a house of a resident of Zhou village. When you walk inside, it is like half for strolling the scenic area and the other half for visiting the villagers. They all get used to seeing tourists around, mothers holding daughters, old grannies sitting outside shops next to each other, two elderly people playing chess on one side of the street. They are not against cameras, instead, they are glad to show us their modern living, and these warm feelings are more meaningful than the history.

We left Zibo by the Qingdao expressway, which is in fact also a scenic spot itself. The Jinqing highway was built in 1993, connecting Jinan to Qingdao. When the expressway was under construction in 1990, the ruins of the 'Late Li Spring and Autumn carriages and horses' were found near Zibo. The government then built 'the Ancient Vehicle museum' to protect the ruins. This batch of mortuary carriages and horses was 200 years older than the Terracotta Army. They were the mortuary objects for the sovereign and big nobles of Qi in the Spring and Autumn Period. More than 600 warhorses

1. A newly married couple is taking wedding photos in front of the church at Qingdao.

were buried after being made unconscious. The ancient and modern transportation vehicles meet here — vertical difference between two millenniums, manifesting the human civilisation.

### Qingdao Greets the Olympic Games Torch

My last stop is Qingdao, the key city of my trip. I immediately went to visit the Aofansai base at Fushan Bay. I arrived at the competition ground and saw the flags of the 2008 Olympic Games and China fluttering with the wind; they will be replaced by the flag of all nations this August. Same as Hong Kong, Qingdao will have standard finals outside Beijing; other cities are only for preliminary heats. However before the arrival of the Olympic Games, Fushan Bay has become the private seashore corridor for the locals. Some people

come here for wedding photo shoots. Standing on the breakwater, there is no clamor from spectators, only exclusive enjoyment of the Qingdao people or tourists now. However, looking at all the facilities constructed for the Olympic Games, especially the stage for the Olympic Games torch; we all anticipate the exciting atmosphere then too.

Dusk came, I complied with the culture here, and ran to the trestle with a small knife. The trestle is the symbol of Qingdao. It juts into the sea by the shore and is 440 metres long. At nightfall, local people come to the beach with knives in the dark for clam digging. There are many clams on the rift in the ebb tide; people all over the beach were digging clams with torches.

In order to have a taste of Qingdao's European flavour, you may go to the signal mountain to look down from the red roof, or go to the cathedral to overlook the cross. I have chosen the latter option and in early morning of my second day. I went to the St. Louis Cathedral, the largest Gothic architecture in Qingdao. There were also many new couples taking photographs in front of it. Lovers from other regions like Beijing, Tianjin or other cities in Shandong, also like to come to Qingdao for wedding photographs, in which the church, beach, and Badaguan are the most popular places.

Coming to Qingdao, you certainly have to drink the 100% fresh Qingdao beer. It has no preservatives added, and you can only taste it on the spot, this immediacy makes it more precious. Having had just a small cup of beer in the Qingdao Brewery, I am already jealous of the Qingdao locals; they only drink beer which is freshly made on the day. During the summer period, locals use plastic bags to drink beers, this keeps more froth. I am not a beer lover, but the fresh Qingdao beer lets me understand that the beer that I drank in the past is not real beer!

Shandong people have heroic personalities, they eat and drink in gulps, and that of course includes slurping beer. Surprisingly, this characteristic of theirs is more conspicuous in the westernised Qingdao.

We lunched at the Golden Hans Restaurant, which served beer, barbecued meats, all home-made. Although the restaurant has a western US theme, as soon as they brought us some beers, and we ate the barbecued meat together, I was soon infected by Shandong's heroic personality. This is the only restaurant in Qingdao which serves a semi-buffet like this. Although it occupies two of the floors, still it is a full house all the time.



Translated by Brian Fung

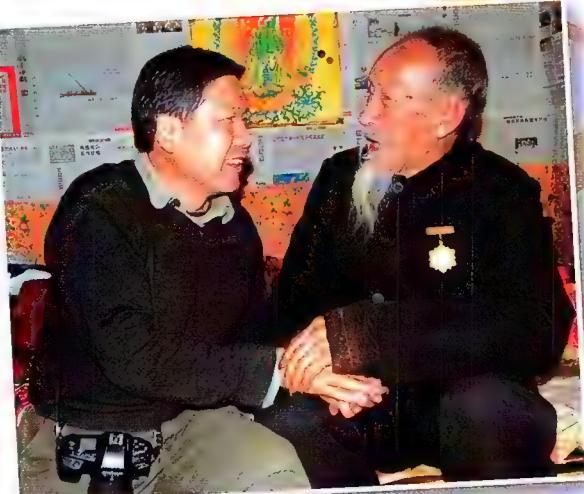




## 1 Back to Taihang Mountain

Several years ago, when I was travelling to Taihang Mountain in Henan Province, I met a hero from the Anti-Japanese War. In this war to save his country his leg was wounded and he has had difficulty walking ever since. After more than half a century, the story of the old hero has been forgotten. I have kept in contact with him and his family since my visit. Recently, I went to Taihang Mountain to see them again.

Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong



In 2003, I went to Luo Jiezhai village near Taihang mountain to conduct interviews. There are south and north villages on the mountain and many heroes have come from here. In the Sui (581 – 618) and Tang Dynasty (618 – 907), a General named Luo was discontented with the tyranny of the Emperor Sui Yang. He and another soldier, Yang Guang came here to set up opposition camps. After General Luo died, his daughter Luo Guixiang took over the commander's duty and established the south view and north view camps which became today's south and north villages. I climbed to the highest point on Luo Jiezhai with a

shepherd and could still see the ruins of the military camps.

Upon leaving the mountain, I met an 88 year-old hero, Si Fengwu. Si joined the Anti-Japanese War (1937 – 1945) against Japan 60 years ago and killed many enemies. During the liberation of Hui County he was nominated as an 'enemy killing hero' of the resistance; however, during the fighting, his calf was torn apart by a Japanese machine gun. Without available medical treatment, he returned home and had to use a razor to remove six pieces of broken bone from his calf – without any anesthetic, since then he has had

1. Si and his family in a group photo in front of their house.

2. Four years passed but Si could still recognise me at once when he saw me.



difficulty walking.

A few days later, I returned to Shenzhen with sadness and mentioned the story of this old hero to friends. Everybody was touched. This spurred us to put our funds together and buy a wheelchair for him. A friend in Zhengzhou helped placing the order and then delivered it to the old hero.

### The Old Hero, Limped with a Stick

The local government showed a lot of appreciation to in the donation of the wheelchair and there was a grand ceremony held at the village gate on the day of delivery, with banners streamed from trees and reporters came from Hong Kong China Tourism Press, local television stations and local newspapers. Si Fengwu arrived by himself limping with a stick, but the moment he sat on the wheelchair, tears welled in his eyes and he looked up at the peak.

### Back to Taihang Mountain

Last Easter holiday, having a few days break, I decided to take a trip to Taihang Mountain once again. The car had just stopped at the south gate of Luo Jiezhai Village, when Si's two sons greeted me. I saw Si in that familiar courtyard, already aged 92, he looked older than before and had become deaf. Si's grandson, Shuan Bao, works in the Wanxian Mountain scenic area as the manager of the tour guiding department and he rushed home to meet us. Shuan Bao said, 'I admire my grandfather the most, as no matter where he goes his back is always straight, like a soldier. Grandfather is very great, and I am reorganising

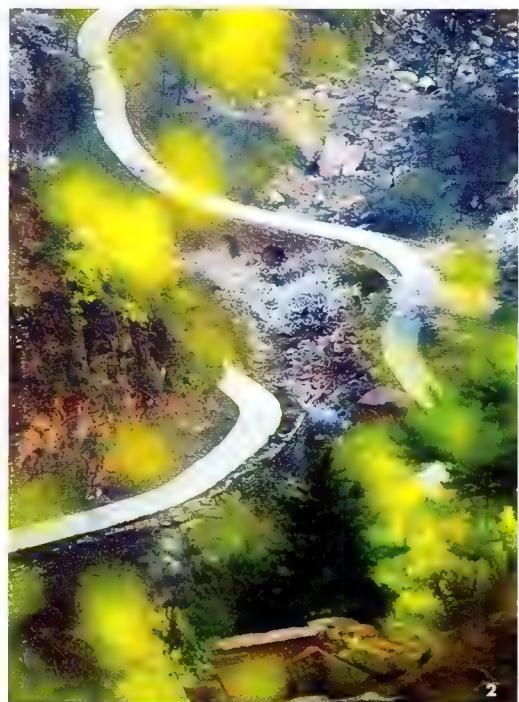
his story now.'

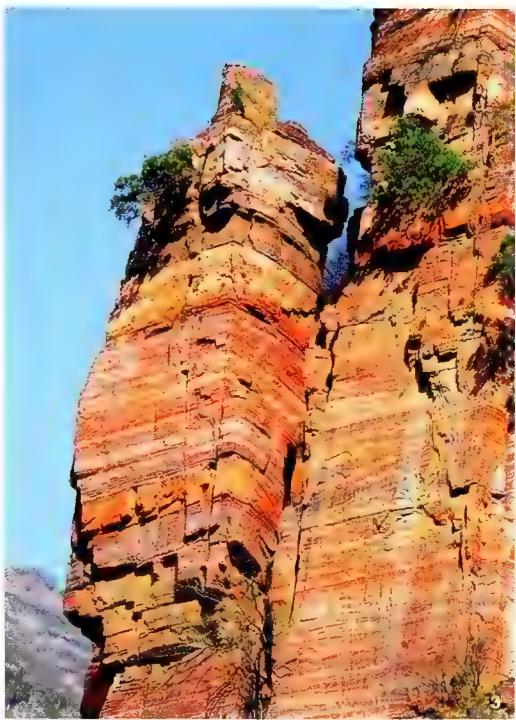
He also showed us the video tape from four years ago which recorded the wheelchair ceremony and also some warm pictures of Si with his granddaughters around his chair. Si smiled happily when he saw himself on the video. He is deaf, cannot move too well and not literate. There was no way to ask him anything, so all we could do was let him speak about what he remembered. Luckily, he liked to talk! He spoke very fast like a machine gun in battle and he retold many fighting stories from the old days one by one.

### The Dark Past and Preserving a Leg

Si recounted his tales using the language of those days and giving us an insight into the brutal war. He said, 'During the war, when we ran out of bullets, we whittled wooden bullets from branches with a kitchen knife, filled our ammunition cases and scared off the Japanese forces'

Si mentioned moments so painfully to recall when he was wounded. 'At that time, the field hospital had more than 1,700 sick and wounded people, but there was only one bottle of penicillin. Everyday, we could only use water to flush the wounds, that was all the medicine that we applied. The medical care personnel were from the sanitation team of a Nationalist, Hu Zongnan. The Japanese planes were dropping supplies to the Japanese forces and they had their own code on the ground — four people would stand at four corners, holding helmets on their bayonets. The plane would then drop supplies. Later, after we discovered this system we obtained the drugs by





copying'it; however, the Japanese soon came back to bomb us when found they had been swindled. My wound was getting worse and the doctors wanted to amputate my leg but I refused the operation. One came with anesthetic and one came to hold me, and I fought back with a brick to bring them down one by one. A political commissar of People's Liberation Army came over to help me. He asked them to stop forcing me to have an amputation. Luckily at that time, family members also arrived and I eventually preserved my leg and left the hospital. That was in April 1945.'

The person that Si spoke of the most was Captain Guo Xing. The stories that came from the war have been used as a basis for the movie '*Plain Guerilla force*'; it was a classic movie produced 40 years ago. Guo Xing is the prototype for the Guerilla Captain Li Xiangyang in the film. Si said that Guo Xing rescued him three times and he rescued him twice.

Several years ago, after Captain Guo Xing retired from his northern border military position, he returned to Luoyang and the two allies met there. Si Zhaoqing said when they met, the two old soldiers were overcome with tears, and amazed. by their unbelievable survival Afterwards, Guo Xing treated Si's whole family to an expensive dinner.

Looking at the same flaming eyes of Si Fengwu, Guo said it reminded him of the roaring slogans which cheered each of them at the time, such as 'slashing the devils' head with broadswords'. To me, it felt like I was seeing the beacon fires from the Anti-Japanese War burning on the Taihang

Mountain, watching men practicing Chinese kung fu in a life and death battle with Japanese forces, seeing the bloody scene of Si killing 14 enemies, watching the moment he and Guo Xing used machine guns to sweep the field madly, blasting the enemy's artillery building and then bursting into the Anyang Airport, celebrating their victory by burning two Japanese aircrafts.

Last year, Si left the mountain to visit a doctor and on the way he visited the place where the aircarts was burned. He received a special entry permit to the airport apron and mounted onto a helicopter parked. He said with extreme excitement that he could not imagine himself would still get on a plane at 91 years old.

### Television and Corn Flour Gruel

The morning that I left the village, I went to say goodbye to Si and entered the simple house piled with stones, pasted newspapers on the walls and ceiling, a television sat in a corner. Si Zhaoqing said that his father likes to watch television in the early morning every day. Although he is completely deaf, he still wants to look at the pictures and know what is happening in China and overseas.

I took a few pictures of Si in the house; he was so happy and kept raising his head to look at the screen. He held my hands and said, 'I have now become a waste for the country; I am useless.' I replied loudly, 'You are a person who has rendered meritorious service for the country.'

As I left, the old mountain village grew smaller behind me disappearing into the distance. I hoped those solemn and stirring stories from the old days can last forever in Taihang Mountain and continue to touch people's heart from generation to generation.

I wish Si good health and a long life.

Translated by Brian Fung

1. The spring breeze was present all over the Taihang Mountain, wild flowers were in full bloom.

2. The road to Luo Jiezai village hovers on the mountain.

3. The high and precipitous cliff was once the barrier to the Japanese army.

4. Si Fengwu, 92 years of age, is still keeping up his appetite.





# Shuanglang Village Dali's Hidden Gem

From Xiaguan — the busy hub of communications and through the ancient city of Dali, Yunnan Province, keep going northward, you'll find a place named Shuanglang (double corridors). While the towns on the west side of Lake Erhai are in a sea of clamour, bars on the Yangren (Foreigner) Street are filled with western flavour. The Bai people in here are having a life of tranquillity, just as their ancestors did a thousand years ago.

Photos by Li Zhixiong Article by Wang Rong

## Align Clutre Fishermen's Town — Shuanglang

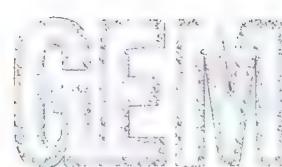
Winding their way along the beautiful shoreline of Lake Erhai, the streets of Shuanglang make a lovely sight in the refreshing sea breeze. Under the trees lining the streets are rows of shop-stands. The vendors are usually women of the Bai people. They are quite friendly, sitting at a table or behind a stove, chatting with each other.

The food they sell is simple, but in great variety — bean jelly in pots, fried fish, and iced papaya juice. There are also many snacks like cooked water caltrops, pickled plums, and fried cheese. In the early mornings of July and August, they also sell

some rare delicacies like chicken fir and boletus.

At dusk, men from the nearby village would go fishing in their boats. Bathed in the glow of the setting sun, they cast their fishing nets with great skills.

When they are back in town, the vendors are already starting their business. Since they all know each other, fishermen sell their fish at low prices. These vendors keep the fish in fresh lake water, waiting for customers. My mouth watered when the vendor handed me a fried fish with seasoning on it. She said with a smile, 'one yuan for it.' Shocked by the low price, I replied in a hurry that I wanted



Shangguan  
Butterfly Spring  
Zhongcheng  
Shuanglang  
Nanzhao Love Island

Xizhou Wase

Lake  
Erhai

YUNNAN  
PROVINCE

Three-Pagoda Park

Dali Ancient City (Yangren / Foreigner Street)

Dali Airport

Cangshan Park  
Dali City (Xiaguan)

Erhai Park

1. The Lake Erhai at the foot of Cangshan Mountain, also known by the name 'a pearl on the plateau', is a famous fishing town.

2. The residents of Shuanglang depend much on Lake Erhai. Their daily meals can't do without a dish of fish.

3. The dream house built by Bai people's artist Zhao Qing on Yuji Island — Sunshine Castle.

five more.

Lake Erhai, also known by the name 'a pearl on the plateau', is a famous fishermen's town. Life of the residents in Shuanglang depends much on the lake. For a thousand years, their daily meals have always included a dish of fish: spicy fish with potatoes cooked in vinegar, fish with bean curd in earthen ware, fish cooked with papaya and frozen fish... It's no exaggeration to say that any of the home-cooked fish in Shuanglang are more special and delicious than those in Dali restaurants in Kunming.

### Build Your Dream House Here

An artist that I know has been in Shuanglang for a whole month, painting the same sunflower every day, from its blooming to its withering. He is not the only artist who has come here to find a home for his soul.

Some rich artists buy villas or build their own ones, like the famous painter of the Bai people, Zhao Qing, and dancer Yang Liping. As for those who do not have much money, they rent houses from the local Bai people, living like other residents.

The villas are built on a large area of sand on one side of the island. This is for the convenience of getting building materials close at hand. These houses feature the Bai people's architectural style. Sunshine on this island is quite alluring. Painter



Zhao Qing channelled a stream into his yard and dug some pools there. He also kept plants in his yard, making it a typical country house. His house is now called 'Ben Yuan' (Yard of one's soul, meaning the spiritual source of life), drawing many tourists.

Later when this Nanzhao Love Island began to boost its tourism on a large scale, Zhao Qing left it for Yuji Island on the opposite shore, where he rebuilt his sunshine castle. The new building is constructed with hard materials like iron sheets, steel ropes, glass and stone. Unlike the reformed style of his former house 'Ben Yuan', this castle of post-modern features has a powerful visual impact. The subtle handling of building materials and optical influence makes this house radiant and bright. The two houses witness the legendary life a painter in Shuanglang. In this harmonious and



1. Representatives of the village tie a piece of red silk to the head of the statue.

2. Long-haired artists also participate in this event, welcoming Benzhu with the villagers.

3. On this grand day of welcoming Benzhu, the women of the Bai people dress perfectly.

4. The wild and primitive beauty of Nanzhao love island.

tranquil village, they stand on two close islands separately, so different, but still the same.

### An Island of Your Own

Now the Nanzhao Love Island has entered the list of the Grade-4A Scenic Spots in China, representing the culture of the Bai people and Nanzhao. Decent hotels and the Cultural Square of the Bai people are built on the island. After enjoying a marvellous dish of spicy fish cooked in vinegar here, you can ask the host to take you out on his boat. In the pale moonlight, the shape of the island shows itself clearly.

I saw the relief sculpture of mother Sha Yi when I went ashore. Without the business of daytime, I can take my time to read in the moonlight the whole story of mother Sha Yi, which is introduced beside the relief. Sha Yi is a strong and beautiful woman. She touched the sunken wood while working at the shore and became pregnant. She gave birth to ten sons who later married the ten daughters of another family living at the foot of Ailaoshan Mountain. They are ancestors of the later Nanzhao people.

### Welcoming Benzhu by Ship

If you visit Shuanglang in the first month of the lunar year, you shouldn't miss the grand day when the local people welcome their Benzhu.



The worship of Benzhu, who is the guardian of a village, is a special religious ceremony of the Bai people in Dali. There's always a Benzhu temple in almost every Bai people's village. The object of Benzhu worship may include all kinds of the immortal like deities, a goddess, the dragon king of sea, legendary emperors and generals, and those heroes in folk tales. Even some huge stones, tree





stumps, pigs, dogs, horses, and bulls are chosen.

The Benzhu Temple of Shuanglang is located at Yakou, Hongshan, at the shore of Lake Erhai. Thus, one of the specialities of their ceremony is to welcome Benzhu in the lake. The fourth day in the first month of the lunar year is the birthday of Benzhu at Hongshan. People get up early that day. Women dress decently, their blue-white turban tied perfectly in place; while men prepare their boats to welcome Benzhu from the temple at Hongshan. They kowtow and hold a ceremony there. After all these rituals, they carried the statue of Benzhu from the shrine and put it on the boat carefully.

The ship will first stop at Qiuquidian, Luoshiqu, where Benzhu 'appreciated flowers' and 'inspected troops', and then sail directly to the north shore of Shuanglang. Welcomed by a dragon and lion dance, and other folk dances playing to the beat of musical instruments like Suona and drums, the statue is taken ashore and placed onto two wooden-wheeled wagons.

People gather to see the wagons when they come close. Two representatives of the village, standing behind the statue, tie a piece of red silk on the head of Benzhu. When the crowd passes by a door, firecrackers are let off and people bow to the statue wholeheartedly holding burning incense.

### Artists to Welcome Benzhu

The statue of Benzhu will stay in every village for one night. Villagers bow before the statue, praying for peace in the village and a good harvest for their crops. At night, folk songs are sung in front of it and the local people perform their own

country drama, to entertain the guardian.

When the statue is transferred to Yuji Island, many people in T-shirts and jeans run towards it. Some of them are bald and some wear long hair. Obviously they are not native, but they arrive ahead of the crowd and take the statue in high spirit. They put it on the wagon and draw it toward the village, laughing all the way. These are artists who settled at Shuanglang. Used to their presence, the local people follow them happily into the village.

Translated by Huang He



### How to travel in Shuanglang

Flight: A single-trip ticket from Shenzhen to Kunming is 1,240 yuan (30% discount in low season). The flight takes one hour and 40 minutes. After that, you can take a 5-hour express-bus trip to Dali, 100 yuan / person, or a 45-minute flight to Dali (ticket for single trip is 430 yuan). Shuttle bus to Shuanglang is available at the bus terminal in Dali.

Accommodation: It's great to stay in the local houses of the Bai people in Shuanglang. The cost for lodging and food is 100 yuan / person.

Festival: Besides welcoming Benzhu in the first month of the lunar year, the grandest Benzhu temple fair in the Shuanglang area is held at the Hongshan temple in lunar April.



# Shandan Army Horse-breeding Farm

Photos & Article by Chen Huai

The Shandan Army Horse-breeding Farm in Gansu Province, set in the lush grasslands of Damaying, has been a place of strategic importance for military commanders and herdsmen for a thousand years. The Shandan horses bred here are renowned at home and abroad, but not many people know of the effort exerted by the herdsmen over so many years. It was built in the Damaying Grasslands, located at the hinterland of the Hexi Corridor of Shandan County.

The Xiongnu, a nomad people who were long entrenched in Mayingtian by Mount Yanzhi, were driven out in 121 B.C. by Huo Qubing, a general of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220), together with his more than ten thousand troops through a series of fierce battles. The Xiongnu were so sad and sang the song: 'We are defeated at Qilian Mountains, our livestock could not breed any more; we lost Mount Yanzhi literally means rouge, and that made our ladies' beauty fading... (due to losing rouge for makeup)' As a result, Mount Yanzhi became famous through the popularity of the song.

Mount Yanzhi is also known as Rouge Mountains because ancient Xiongnu people transplanted a kind of flower to the mountain and its women used the pollen of the flower as a rouge, hence the mountain named after that.

### Thousand-year-old Imperial Horse Farm

The area of Damaying Grasslands and the southern foot of Mount Yanzhi has been always the place where troops are stationed and horses bred since the Xiongnu were driven out from here by Huo Qubing. According to the local annals, more than seventy thousand horses were once raised in this area during the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907), a time of great prosperity. And during the Yuan (1271 – 1368), Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) Dynasties, it became a horse-breeding base. The Shandan Horse, bred in 1982, is one of the four famous horses of China. Though the Huangchengtan area is not included in today's Shandan horse farm, it is still the largest natural horse farm in the world.

Mount Yanzhi stands in the middle of the natural corridor formed by Qilian and Longshou mountains. People can see traces of the ancient



Silk Road of the Han and Tang dynasties at its southern and northern ends and beacon towers as well, known as Dun by the local people. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, eight beacon towers on both south and north sides of the mountain were built and people who were in charge of the beacon towers were known as chief stewards. The south side belonged to Damaying and the north to Xiakouying.

Troops were stationed at the Damaying grasslands and horses herded there since the Han Dynasty and a special department — Mu (meaning herding) for horse-raising was set up in the Tang Dynasty. The beacon towers left from the previous dynasties were renovated in the early years of the reign of Emperor Hong Wu of the Ming Dynasty and then more than 4,100 buildings, such as castles, government offices, warehouses, and stables, were gradually built in this area.

Since the Damaying Grasslands were rich with grasses for grazing, when society was in

1. The Shandan Army Horse Farm is rich with grazing grassland so a lot of herdsmen go there to herd their horses. (Hong Kong China Tourism Photo Library)

2. Shandan horses drink fine-quality spring water.

3. Xidahe Reservoir near Shandan horse farm in the autumn.

4. The horses go back to the farm to drink water in the mornings.





turmoil, the nomadic tribes from surrounding areas would come to stay. Therefore, the rulers of various dynasties would set up defences to prevent the nomadic tribes occupying the area.

### Hardships of the Herdsman

At the end of September, the grasses of the

Damaying Grasslands turn yellow. Wei Lin, a herdsman, gets up at six and goes to the farm after having his breakfast. As soon as he arrives at the farm, he occupies himself by feeding the horses together with his assistants. A special drinking area for the horses is designated in the mountain valley and every day four droves of horses come here to drink water under the supervision of herders. Great attention is paid to the quality of the water.

Wei Lin and his assistants found their personal mounts among the horses and then tied them to the manger after putting on their equipment. Each of the herdsman here has his own mount, and when they are not on duty, they are allowed to mingle with the other horses. Wei Lin also told me that the herdsman paid great attention to their mounts. A fine mount is not only fast in speed, but also as comfortable as a car when sitting on it.

Special emphasis is placed on the saddle, stirrups and other apparatus by the herdsman. A nice saddle makes riders more comfortable and helps the horse to avoid feeling tired. The stirrups must be heavy enough and as smooth as jade, so the riders' shoes will not be damaged.

Three generations of Wei Lin's family have worked at the horse farm. He said his grandfather once fed livestock for a rich family and then lost all his family's property through gambling, so they had to work at the horse farm. Wei Lin, born in 1954, started herding at the horse farm when he was only 12 years old. After working at the farm 16 years, he was really exhausted. He sighed again, 'Herding horses is really hard. Several days ago I started to go up the mountains at 4:30 in the afternoon and worked till five the next morning when the snow stopped. I herded about 350 horses and there were totally about 500 adding the 200 herded by another person. The horses were restless and irascible because they did not have enough grass to eat since the grass was covered by snow. Both of us had to block them all the night by running over the snow-covered mountain slope. I slept a whole day after changing shifts.'

The farm is still backward economically since the output and market for the products of winery and carpet mill are limited. In addition, the farm, located in a remote area, is not well connected with the outside world, so the herdsman here still tend to the old ways. They do not want to find jobs in other places, so working at the horse farm is their only choice. I was surprised to learn that 70 percent of the young people aged under 30 at the farm were senior high school graduates. Children of the herdsman usually go to the senior high school run by the head farm and only a few



go on to universities, so the majority will come back to work on the horse farm.

### World-renowned Shandan Horses

The farm started to breed fine horses through cross-breeding by introducing horses from the Don River stud of Russia in 1953. The first cross-bred generation, tall and big, was cultivated after ten years, but they were not fine enough because they were not very adaptable and had special requirements in feeding. Then they were back-

crossed again and again until eventually the Shandan horse was bred in 1982. Basically it is not related to the Don River stud. The Shandan horse, sturdy and magnificent, looks like the horses in the Tang Dynasty painting, 'Halis'. The Shandan horse is well-proportioned and its hereditary ability is stable. They can carry and pull things and be ridden as well. Since the 1950s, the Shandan Army Horse Farm has exported more than a hundred thousand horses to countries around Asia, Europe and the Americas. 

1. A child herds sheep at the northern foot of Mount Yanzhi.
2. A pony basks in the sunshine leaning against its mother.
3. Peasants of Maying Township use carts pulled by mules as a means of transport.
4. Cattle and sheep graze under the boundless blue sky, while the grass rustles in the wind.

### Travel Tips

#### Transportation:

Shandan Army Horse Farm, located in the middle section of Hexi Corridor, is 50 kilometres southeast of the Shandan County town. It is convenient to go there by bus or train. You may first take the train to Shandan or Zhangye and then take a bus to the Shandan Army Horse Farm and Damaying. But only one regular bus goes to the No. I Branch every day.

**Climate:** Damaying Grasslands belong to highland temperate zone and its northern part is an arid area, while the southern half is dark and damp. Rainfall mainly concentrates in July, August and September and its average annual temperature is 2°C below zero. The lowest temperature of the area is 30°C below zero while the average temperature in July is 13.9°C.

**Clothing:** The Shandan Army Horse Farm, located at the foot of Qilian Mountains, is cool even in summer, especially in the mornings and evenings, so you have to bring enough clothes with you. The best travel time is from July to September.

**Food and Accommodation:** There are restaurants on the street of No. I Branch and the food of Baiyun Restaurant there is not bad. Xidahe Reservoir and Kulong Gorge near the dam, five kilometres from the No. I Branch, are tourist attractions, where eating mutton with the hands is offered by the tent restaurant. Comparatively speaking, the food there is a little expensive. Accommodation at the Shandan Army Horse Farm, especially in No. I Branch, is poor, so don't have too high expectations.

#### Guide:

1. Usually there are herdsmen who solicit customers near Xidahe Reservoir. They are generally kind and friendly to people and only ask for a little money.
2. You will pass by Mount Yanzhan when going to the horse farm, but you cannot visit both of these two places in one day.
3. 'Home of Tourist', a non-commercial department for cultural exchange, is at the pass of the Great Wall, (at 2,641 kilometres of the 312 National Highway), 20 kilometres east of Shandan County seat, offers accommodation and vehicles for people going around the Shandan area. Tel: (0936) 279 3166



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# Tibet through the Lenses of Father and Son Photographers

(Editor's note) The pictures for this article were taken by the 10th Demu Denzin Gyaco (1901—1973), Tibet's first photographer, and his second son Demu Wangjig Doje (1949—). Demu Denzin Gyaco was a famous upper-class figure and revered Tulku in Tibet. He was one of the Rinpoche (Living Buddha) of the four royal monasteries, (Kunde Ling, Tsomon Ling, Tengye Ling and Drib Tsemchok Ling), a title conferred by the Qing government.

In 1951, when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) liberated Tibet peacefully, the 10th Demu Denzin Gyaco helped the PLA to solve the food supply problems. Picking up photography in 1925, he amassed a large number of pictures of monks and laymen, social customs, traditional culture and religious events. The valuable pictures capture a vista of the first half of the 20th century with unique images of a fading time. Some of the pictures have important historical value.

His son, Wangjig Doje, one of Tibet's renowned photographers, is now the chair of the Tibet Photographers Association. In his time, as Tibet went through drastic social changes, his works were dedicated largely to the development of the Tibet Autonomous Region in the 40 years since its founding. He has focused his camera on people's lives, religious belief, folk customs, portraits and other aspects of Tibet's life since it was opened to the outside world.

Photos by Demu Denzin Gyaco and Demu Wangjig Doje  
Article by Demu Wangjig Doje



3

Previous page:

1. Statue of Buddha Maitreya (taken in the 1930s).
2. The 10th Demu Rinpoche (taken in 1925).
3. Demu Wangjigug Doje and his father's servants (taken in 1951).



The 10th Demu Rinpoche Denzin Gyaco was my father. 'Rinpoche' is the Tibetan honorific title for a Tulku, while Demu is a hereditary title named after a place.

### Restoring the Authority of the 10th Demu

In 1905, the reincarnate seeking team for the Demu Rinpoche formed by Demu Monastery, Tengye Ling Monastery, and Loseling Dratsang (Tibetan monastic college) of Drepung Monastery and two Khenpos (abbots) of Sera Monastery and Ganden Monastery verified that my father, a 4-year-old, was the only candidate; and therefore, the reincarnate of the 9th Demu Rinpoche. At the time, the 13th Dalai Lama had fled the invading British army led by Francis Younghusband (1863—1942), and was in exile in Mongolia and unable to be contacted. Traditionally, the reincarnate of Demu Rinpoche needed to be recognised by the present Dalai Lama and approved by the central

government before he could be granted the title. Consequently, my father was sent to a small monastery in the east of Sera Monastery, to study.

In fact, the 13th Dalai Lama in Mongolia had already known that the Demu reincarnate had been found. However, he did not officially approve of the selection. Yulian, then Minister to Tibet of the Qing Dynasty, had kept good relations with the 9th Demu. He submitted the case directly to Emperor Guangxu (1871—1908), petitioning for the return of the monastery, affiliated monasteries, manors and the fortune owned formerly by the late 9th Demu Rinpoche to his reincarnate, and the conferment of Hutuktu to him. Yet the petition had been granted, the emperor died, and the succeeding Emperor Xuantong (1906—1967) approved it instead. Though without the recognition of the Dalai Lama, my father was the 10th Demu Rinpoche to the general public, and he started the procedure of religious pursuit required for a



1. Demu Rinpoche wearing the empowerment costume of the Tantric Buddhism.

2. A Tibetan officer in service uniform.

3. An armed escort of the Dalai Lama drilling in Jiangsixia Road (current Beijing Road), Lhasa.

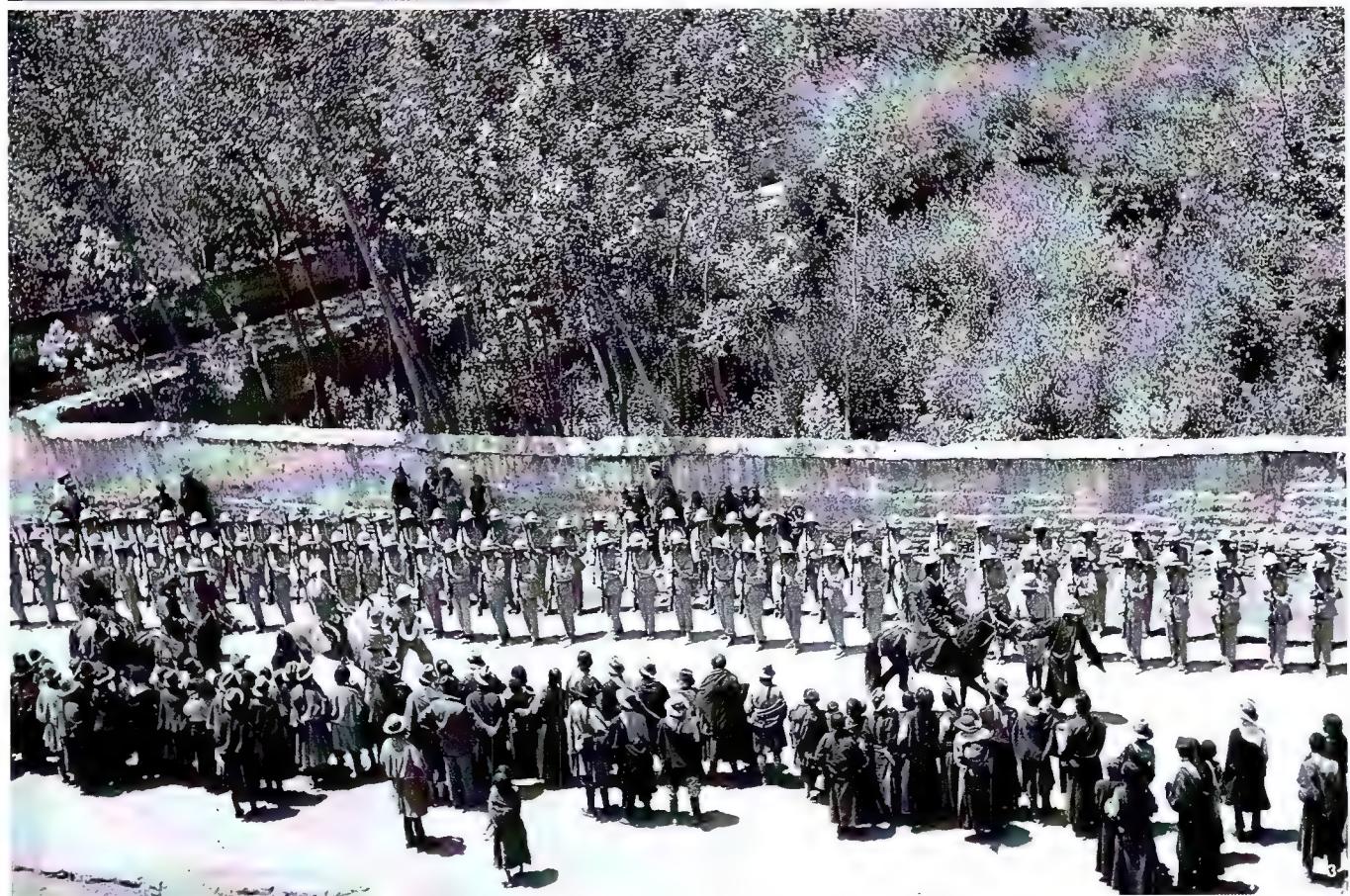
Rinpoche. In 1908, when returning to Lhasa, the Dalai Lama recognised my father eventually after the meditative pleas of many parties.

In 1910, my father was enthroned officially in tantric rituals in Tengye Ling, which marked the transition from reincarnate to Tulku. He became the 10th Demu Rinpoche and entered the 'Khenpo house' of the Loseling Dratsang in Drepung Monastery where he studied the Sutra.

In 1911, the Chinese Revolution broke out. The Qing army led by Zhao Erfeng in Sichuan were jittery and the army withdrew in a mutiny. At the end of 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, punishing those entangled with the Qing army in Sichuan.

Tengye Ling Monastery bore the brunt of the punishment as it had supported the Qing army in Sichuan in confronting the Tibetan central government. The manors and fortune of the monastery were all confiscated. The monks were dismissed, exiled or transferred to other monasteries.

According to the rescript decreed on my father by the 13th Dalai Lama, Tengye Ling Monastery colluded with the Qing army in Sichuan and caused disasters to befall the land of snow. Therefore, the Tengye Ling Monastery's fortune was confiscated. However, the young Demu





Rinpoche did not get involved in the whole issue, as he studied in Drepung Monastery. Only his title 'Hutuktu' was removed and replaced with a lesser title. At 12, my father lost everything and he could only study Buddhist sutras in Drepung Monastery with just a few monks that were left to take care of him.

### Strict Examination for the Geshe Degree

The 10th Demu remained in Drepung Monastery to study. As a teacher, the 13th Dalai

Lama was very strict with my father and invigilated the Lharampa Geshe (a Geshe degree with highest honours) exams in person. As a strict teacher nurtures an accomplished disciple, the 13th Dalai Lama emphasised study, hoping to train a truly erudite Rinpoche.

In 1920 when Demu was 19, he ranked third in the Lharampa Geshe exams. In 1921, it was arranged for my father to study Tantra in the Gyume Dratsang (the Lower Tantric College) where it was very strict for the lama students. Three years after he learned the rituals, tenets and practice methodology, and was empowered as the tradition required; therefore, he was promoted to Gekor, or disciplinarian, and heading toward the path of stepping up to the throne of Ganden Tripa (throne holder).

After the 10th Demu Rinpoche had made some achievements in Buddhist pursuit, he was already in the self-cultivation stage without monastic precepts, so he could roam different places or practise meditation in seclusion. Soon later, he headed for Bariku Practice Cave at the age of 24.

### A 'Dead Nepalese' as His Abecedarian Teacher on Photography

Shortly after the retreat, a Nepalese man came to beg for food. After listening to his story, Demu made him stay. As a result, my father's life had an interesting twist.

The Nepalese man used to run a picture studio in Lhasa and had married a Tibetan woman. Earlier he had been so sick that he was facing death. According to their customs, a dying man should not pass away at home; he should be carried out of home before his last breath, then be cremated after death. As Lhasa did not have a crematorium, he was carried to the celestial burial platform and a celestial burial master was hired for the service. But dramatically, he woke up at dawn.

According to Nepalese custom, he was already a 'dead person', so he could not go home or back to the city. He had to beg along the mountain trail of Sera Monastery. On the way, he met my father and they stayed together for two to three years. My father said the Nepalese man taught him photography. The Nepalese man wrote to his wife and asked for a camera and other equipment, and gave those to my father as a gift. This was his first camera. It was a wooden camera in the shape of a cube, 30 cm in all dimensions. It consisted of simple leather bellows and guide rails. It offered only a few aperture values and shutter speeds as 1/25 second, 1/50 second, bulb setting and time exposure.

## Before the 13th Dalai Lama's Attainment of Nirvana

My father said that he was summoned to the Dalai Lama before his attainment of nirvana. He said to my father, with some regret, that he intended to train him to be the Ganden Tripa (throne holder) through strict study, and then a regent. As a regent, he would take office of the Dalai Lama in the interval period after the former Dalai Lama attained nirvana and before the reincarnate reached 18, the legal age of holding the position. The Dalai Lama also said that he wanted to return all the fortune of Tengye Ling Monastery to my father. However, it seemed my father was not interested in it, that he would not impose on him, and wished him all the best in the future. Soon after their talk, the 13th Dalai Lama passed away. In fact, my father went for a reclusive meditation after his study in the Lower Tantric College, and did not

pursue further study in Ganden Monastery. In other words, he did not become a candidate for the Ganden Jangtze Dharma King, or Ganden Tripa. If he were to become Ganden Tripa, he would have to have gone further in that direction.

1. Body guards of the 5th Rezen Rinpoche as regent (in the 1930s).

2. Demu and wife in their Lhasa home (taken in 1951).

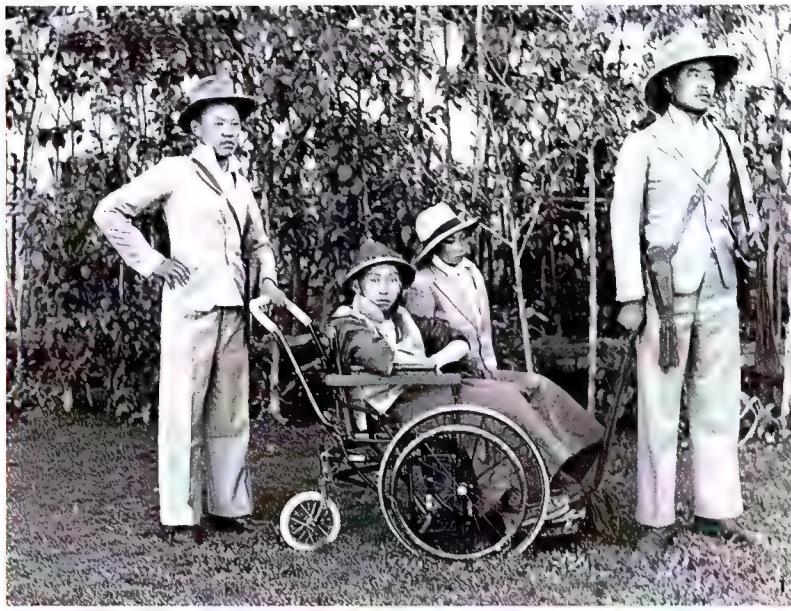
3. The wife of Demu and her eldest son Awang Gelie (taken in 1942).

## Encountering Destined Dakini

Probably in 1937, my father met my mother, when he was listening to sutra preaching in Pabongka Monastery. My mother, a nun in Tsangkhung Nunnery, was also there as a listener.

My mother, Chenlai Deqin (pinyin transliteration), was born into a wealthy family in Bakuo Street, Lhasa, in 1919. The current Makye Ame Restaurant in the southeast Bakuo Street was her home. The restaurant was then called 'yellow shop'. The yellow colour was related to the 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso (1683—1706), and the building was believed to





be the rendezvous place of the Dalai Lama and his lover. For that reason, it was painted yellow (the colour of the Yellow Hat Gelug Sect referring to the Dalai Lama). My mother was beautiful when she was young, and in her teens she was converted to the Tsangkhung Nunnery of the Gelug Sect. Tsangkhung Nunnery was interesting, as it was a nunnery with many daughters of nobles and merchants. Their life was wealthy and often known for love affairs.

I was told that my mother had resumed secular life before she met my father. In Tibet, resuming secular life actually means that a monk or nun has a sexual life, but does not necessarily leave the monastic community. Her first man was a principal noble called Suo Kang (pinyin transliteration). It was said that a few nuns from Tsangkhung watched opera in the courtyard of Suo Kang's home. Suo Kang saw beautiful Chenlai Deqin and approached her. Chenlai Deqin blushed and covered her head with her kasayas (Buddhist monks robes). Suo Kang carried her in his arms and walked out. My mother, therefore, resumed secular life.

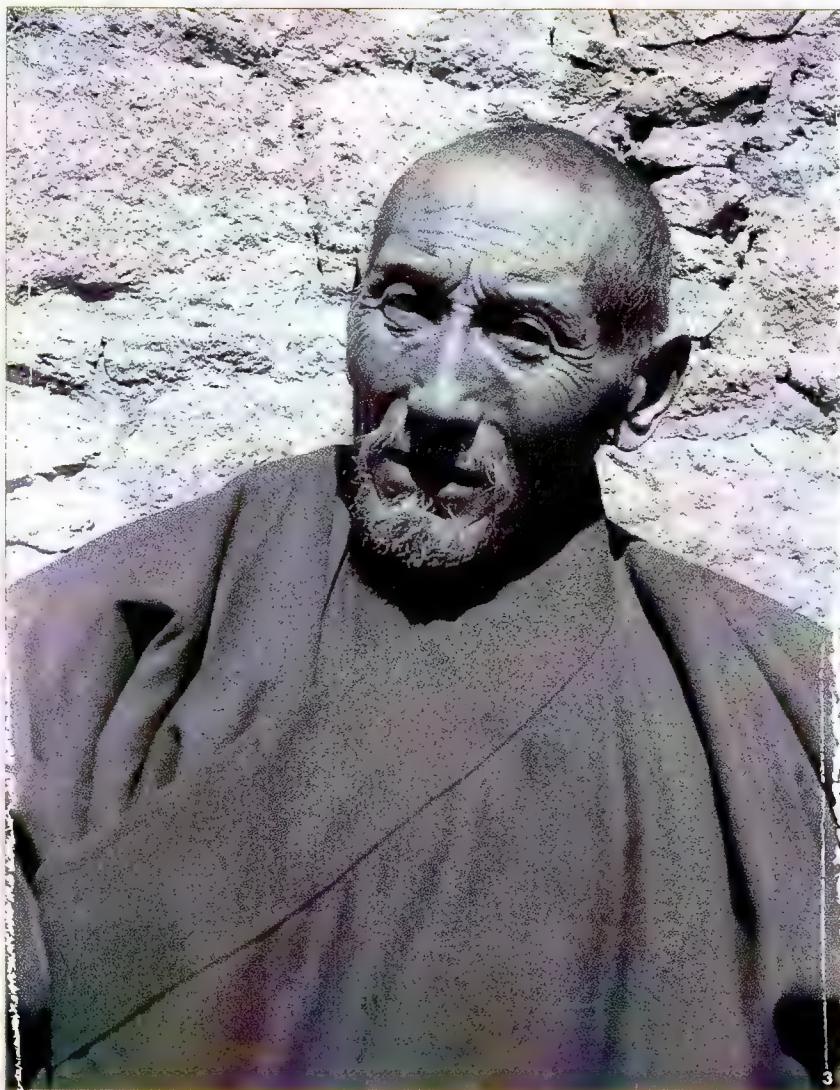
My father had a sangha (Dharma fellow) in Pabongka Monastery, named Dapu Duojie Baima Boza, a Gelugpa Rinpoche, who was a teacher and disciple to him. He had the power of knowing people's previous and future lives. He told my father that my parents had a relationship in a former life, and their encounter in this life meant that their karmic bond had not ended. Therefore, they should reunite. In 1938, my father Demu, 38, and mother Chenlai Deqin, 19, married.

### A Zealous Photography Fan

Photography was my father's main interest. At the beginning, he used the wooden camera. In the 1940s he bought on his trip to India a Zeiss Ikon, with which he took many pictures. Later on, when he was better off, he got more cameras and set up a darkroom at home. When there was electricity, he bought an Omega C760 Enlarger to enlarge his pictures.

My father had a barn for storing negatives and pictures. He showed me that once, and I was surprised at the sheer number of pictures—tens or even hundreds of thousands. He liked to take pictures of families, acquaintances and friends. He gave pictures to them as gifts. The content of the pictures was related to his life. The images were full of personal feelings. Picture-taking was pure happiness for him.

He did not shoot for a grand purpose. He picked up photography for his own interest and fun. In the 1930s and 1940s he took many



1. The 5th Rezen Rinpoche in the wheelchair and his attendants (taken in the 1930s).

2. The Indian driver of Demu Rinpoche (left) (taken in 1953).

3. The last picture of the 10th Demu Rinpoche (taken by Wangjig Doje on 1st May 1973).

pictures. In the 1950s he had a heavy workload of social activities, and had less time for photography. In the early 1960s he took souvenir pictures of families and friends. From 1964 onwards he took no more pictures.

### Last Picture of My Father

The last picture of my father was taken by me. On May 1, 1973, I borrowed a 135 camera and had a pleasure trip to Norbulingka. When I returned home, I saw my sick father was sunbathing at the gate of his home. He said, 'Can you take a picture of me?' Looking at father in low spirits, I felt sorry for him and made an excuse, 'This camera is no good. I'll take a better shot for you when I borrow a good one next time.' 'There may not be another chance,' he said. I did not get his meaning; I took a portrait of him. On May 6, his sickness got worse; he was lying in his death bed and asked about the picture. The next day, I hurried to the picture studio and developed the

pictures. Looking at his photo, he commented, 'Oh, I'm really old.' Besides that, he said nothing. On May 16, he passed away.

The picture was the only one since 1965, and that was the last time he had seen himself in a picture.

Someone asked me why my father could shoot such excellent images without any professional photography training. My father had a peaceful mind. When he took pictures, he remained peaceful. He was not troubled with the questions 'what do I take pictures for' or 'how should I take pictures'. For him, picture taking was pure enjoyment, pleasure, dedication—and nothing more. He studied five disciplines of Buddhism, including arts, since he was a child. He had a good artistic sense. 'Like father, like son', I'm an extended episode of my father's story. Yet we are in two different eras. In the 100 years of the 20th century, with 1951 as a watershed, Tibet experienced drastic social reform. Such social



1. Beijing Road East, Lhasa, formerly Jiangsixia Road (taken by Denzin Gyaco in 1956).

2. Beijing Road East, Lhasa (taken by Wangjig Doje in 2005).

3. A panoramic view of Lhasa (taken by Denzin Gyaco in 1942).

4. Lhasa at a glance (taken by Wangjig Doje in 2005).



week after our arrival in Lhasa, I was born.

### Almost the Tsomon Ling Rinpoche

In 1952 when I was four years old, a few lamas from Tsomon Ling Monastery visited us, saying they had come to seek the reincarnate of a Rinpoche. They told my father that his second son Wangjig Doje was verified to be the reincarnate of the 4th Tsomon Ling Rinpoche after divination.

Regarding the fact, my parents were happy, but worried. Tsomon Ling Rinpoche was the Rinpoche of Sera Monastery. Like the title Demu of my father, Tsomon Ling Rinpoche was one of the principal Hutukts conferred by the Qing emperor; Tsomon Ling was one of four principal monasteries. The Rinpoches of the four principal monasteries had taken regency for over 103 years. Facing such a lofty Buddhist status, my mother was hesitating. My father was unwilling to send me to become a Rinpoche and said, 'I'm a Rinpoche. His brother is a Rinpoche. He is now verified as the reincarnate of a Rinpoche. What a coincidence!'

There were three reincarnate candidates for the Tsomon Ling Rinpoche, and a name list would be reported to the Dalai Lama for verification. My father heard that I ranked first among three candidates, which meant I was the most likely to become the reincarnate. He secretly presented an iron ladder,

reform reflected on my family leading to different fates and stories for my father and me.

My story started at the eve of the huge social change. At the time, there were no explicit signs. My father, a sensitive person, sensed that Tibet would witness a 'storm' soon. Perhaps the frustrated experiences of the previous Demus resulted in the indifference of my father to fame and fortune. He repeatedly avoided the chance to step up to the regency. After the 13th Dalai Lama attained nirvana, Tibet was stranded in a series of accidents. With his special political sensitiveness, my father left Lhasa with my mother for India to flee the imminent troubles in 1946. He escaped from Tibet's most complicated and eventful period.

My mother gave birth to a large number of children, but most of them died young. My eldest brother was born in 1939. Before I was born, my mother had been pregnant seven times, but no other children survived. In the autumn of 1949, when I was about to be born, my mother was worried and asked my father to do divination, intending to decide whether to stay in India or go back to Lhasa. The divination showed that my mother should give birth in India, but my father hesitated about the result. On second thoughts, he realised that we should take the opposite route of the divination result and go back to Tibet. One

a fashionable and rare gift bought from India to the families of the Dalai Lama, asking them to eliminate me from the list. Therefore, there were only two candidates left. My fate took a big turn at that point and I was destined to be a layman forever.

### My First Picture-taking Experience

In 1956, my father and mother went to India for the 2,500th anniversary of the birth of Sakyamuni (the founder of Buddhism). They brought home two small cameras for my younger brother and me. The cameras, similar to the 110 cameras now, used 8 mm film and were small in size. I used my first camera to take some pictures, and it was my first exposure to photography.

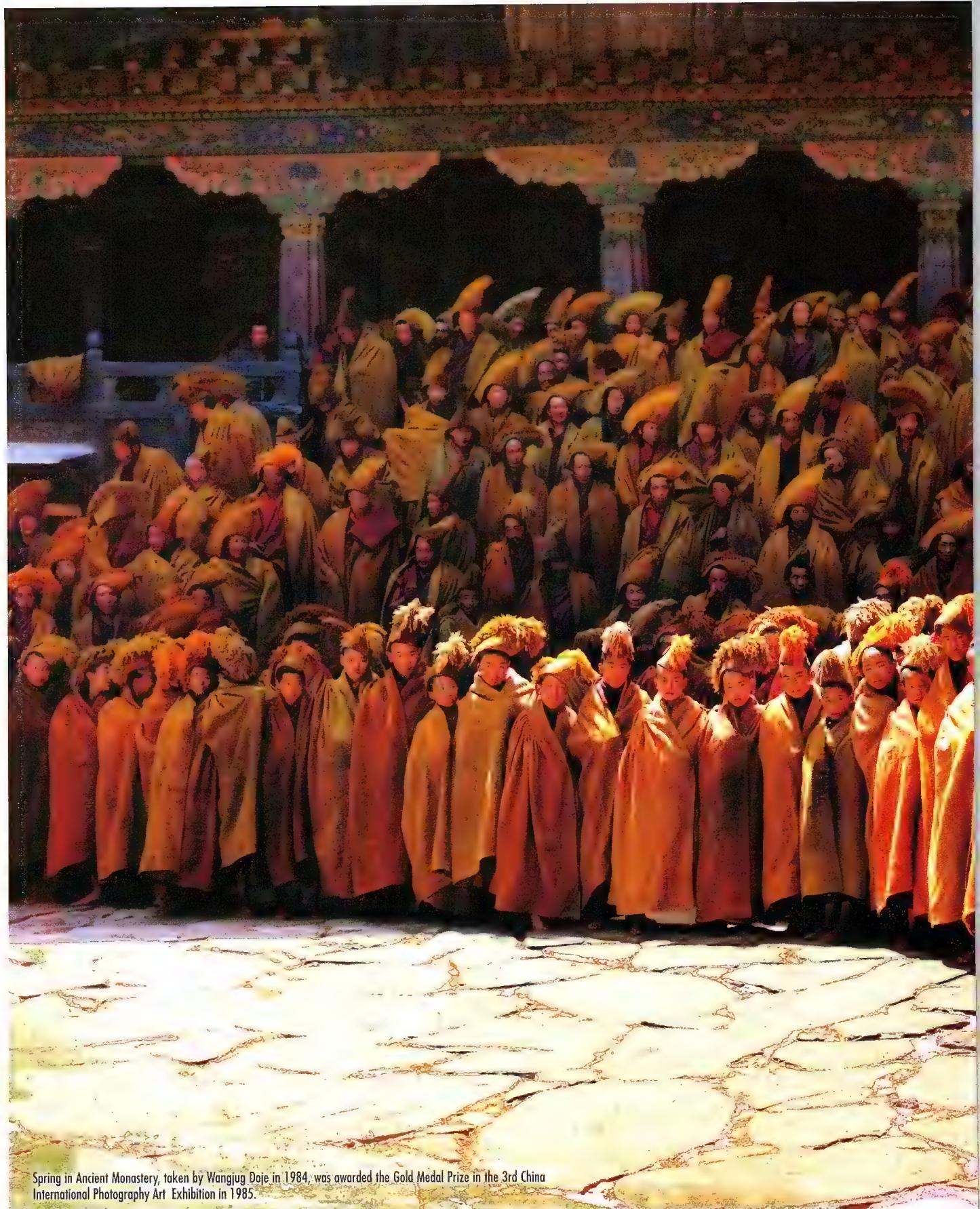
I focused the camera at the people and objects in motion, and pressed the shutter time and again.

It was so interesting that things were frozen in time on the pictures after I pressed the shutter. I kept shooting in different places. I did not care what was left in the camera. I liked the fresh feel of pressing the shutter again and again. It was part of my happy childhood.

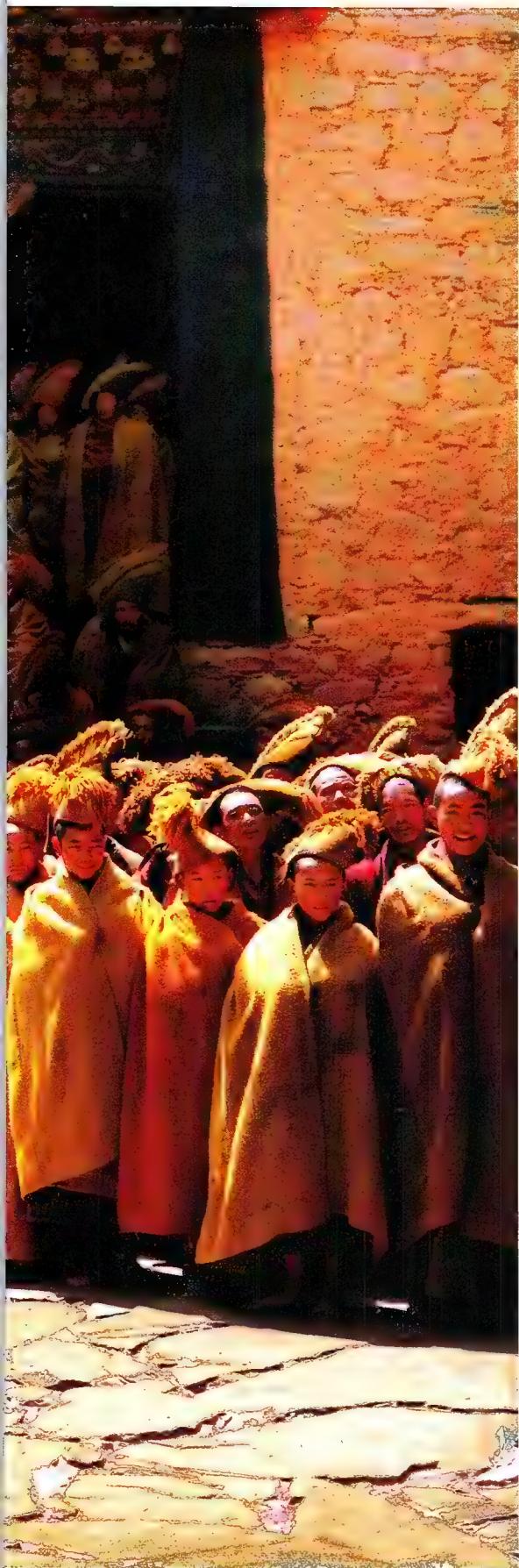
As I learned photography, father did not offer me much direct guidance. The most distinctive influence my father had on me was that he taught me how to behave. I benefited from his teaching my whole life.

I respect my father, as if he was a Tulku, learned and compassionate. I loved my father, a real man. He made mistakes sometimes, but he was honest and humble. He was my teacher in photography, driving, history, Buddhism and most important of all, in the ways of being a man.





Spring in Ancient Monastery, taken by Wangjue Doje in 1984, was awarded the Gold Medal Prize in the 3rd China International Photography Art Exhibition in 1985.



## The Enigmatic Demu Accident

The Demu Accident refers to the failure and exposure of the incantation by the 9th Demu on the 13th Dalai Lama. The accident can be traced back to the relationship between the 1st Demu and his successors, and the Dalai Lama. After the 1st Phagpalha Hutuktu built a monastery in Demu, he sent his scripture teacher (Konchok Jongnai) and uncle, to become abbot. Konchok Jongnai was the 1st Demu Rinpoche. In 1453 when he was 80, he attained nirvana. When the line passed to the 4th Demu, he was a close friend of the 5th Dalai Lama. They went together to Shengjing (current Shenyang, Liaoning Province), to present themselves to the Qing Emperor, Shunzhi (1638 – 1661). The 5th Demu was tonsured (had his head shaved) by the 5th Dalai Lama, and was bestowed with substantive monasteries and manors. The 6th Demu was tonsured by the 7th Dalai Lama. After the 7th Dalai Lama attained nirvana, the 6th Demu assumed regency in 1757. He was the first monk regent in Tibet. He presided over the construction of the stupa of the 7th Dalai Lama. He also led the search for the reincarnate of the 8th Dalai Lama Jampel Gyatso. In the northwest corner of Jokhang Temple he ordered the construction of Tengye Ling Monastery, the residence of the Demus Rinpoches.

The 7th Demu was the scripture teacher of the 9th Dalai Lama and the regent. The 9th Dalai Lama died suddenly at the age of 11 in the Potala Palace. Qing Emperor Jiaqing (1760 – 1820) ordered a search for the reincarnate and regency by the Demu Rinpoche. The 7th Demu reigned as regent for seven years. In that period he organised the construction of the stupa of the 9th Dalai Lama.

The span from the 9th to the 13th Dalai Lamas was rather short. It indicated that Tibet's high-level politics was in chaos.

In August 1895, the regent 9th Demu Rinpoche asked the Dalai Lama if he could resign and his wish was granted. The resignation of the 9th Demu meant a huge loss of power and fortune for Norbu Tsering, his nephew and monk attendant of Tengye Ling Monastery. According to my father, Norbu Tsering, Nangchung Chokhyong and Baxi (Chikhyap Khenpo, attendant monk official of the 13th Dalai Lama) conspired to harm the 13th Dalai Lama. They planned to make for the Dalai Lama a pair of boots with a hidden inscription of the birth date and time of the Dalai Lama. Later on they would invite a famous Khenpo of the Nyingma Sect to wear the boots first and then cast a spell over the boots. They would present the enchanted boots to the Dalai Lama. They thought that if the incantation worked, the 13th Dalai Lama would pass away soon. In that case, the 9th Demu would stay on and hold the regency again. Norbu Tsering promised that if the plan was successful he would give a lot of monors and fortune to his two accomplices.

Before long, the boots were presented to the Dalai Lama. It was said that the Dalai Lama wore them and became sick. Nobody knew the reason. Because of fear or for some other reason, Nangchung Chokhyong revealed the conspiracy.

Norbu Tsering was arrested. Though the 9th Demu Rinpoche did not know about the conspiracy, he was also incarcerated in Xiaojinjiao Prison of the Potala Palace, where high-level officials were put behind bars. Later on, Demu Rinpoche was transferred to a small hut built specially for him in the rear of Tengye Ling Monastery. The hut was no taller or wider than his own body. After over a year, the 9th Demu died in anguish in the hut. It was 1900, and he was 45.

Shortly afterwards, the central government decreed that no Demu reincarnate be sought, and that all manors and fortune of Demu and Tengye Ling Monastery be confiscated by the central government.

Translated by Zhang Boli

# Ling Canal

## Flowing For 2,000 Years

Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong

Located in Xing'an County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Ling Canal was an ancient water conservancy project, which will most probably enter the World Cultural Heritage List. As the only canal in the world constructed with low water yield, Ling Canal — only several tens of kilometres long — connects the Yangtze River and the Pearl River. It also helped to unify China in the era of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. What's the most amazing is that its function of defending against floods and irrigating still serves today after 2,200 years, continuously benefiting people in their daily lives.



Now, tourism at Ling Canal is booming. Along the channel to the south are Xing'an Water Street and the underground part of Ling Canal. To the north is the headstream of Zi River where you can take part in the festival when people put floating candles in Zi River.

At one end is the northern canal, which flows into the Xiang River; at the other end lies the southern canal, which empties into the Li River. Ling Canal is regarded as one of the top three ancient irrigation

projects of China. The other two are Dujiangyan Dam in Chengdu, Sichuan and Zhenguo Canal in Shaanxi Province, which are solely irrigating facilities. The former has been irrigating Heaven's Land-Sichuan Province and has been entered on the World Heritage List. The latter has turned the arid land of Guanzhong Plain (central Shaanxi) into a rich and fertile area. As for Ling Canal, the initial purpose was to support the military expansion of the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C. — 206 B.C.).

### Ling Canal: the War Outcome

In 221 B.C., the emperor Qin Shi Huang annexed the six states of the north (Qi States, Chu

States, Yan States, Han States, Zhao States, Wei States). Later, he dispatched 550,000 soldiers in five directions and expanded to places like Fujian, Guangdong, Baiyue in Guangxi. Three years passed, his attacks had been in vain because there were no convenient roads to transport military supplies to the south. At this time, it occurred to him that a water route was needed. If they could cross the Xiang River and Li River and connect the two river systems of the Yangtze River and Pearl River, supplies like food and money could be forwarded to the front. Therefore, he ordered the construction of the canal. When it was finished five years later, it functioned well and changed the face of the war. The next year, the regions south of the Five Ridges (covering Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces) officially became parts of the territory of the Qin Dynasty.

Ling Canal was a significant route between Central Plains, Guangdong, and Guangxi. In its heyday during the Qing Dynasty (1636 – 1911), it used to carry over 200 ships a day. After the opening of the Xiang-Gui railway, Ling Canal gradually became an irrigating canal.

### **The Two Rivers Passing by Each Other: Xiang River Flowing Northward and Li River Southward**

The geography of Xing'an is quite interesting: in the southeast, it is high in the south and low in the north; and vice versa in the northwest. Thus, a basin with the height of only 200 metres is formed in the middle of Xing'an County, which is the well known 'Xiang-Gui Walkway'. It has always been a



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crucial road from Hunan to Guangxi.

Stemming from Haiyang Mountain of Lingchuan, Xiang River flows into Yangtze River; while the Li River comes from the highest mountain in south China — Cat (Maóer) Mountain and diverges southward into Xi River and Pearl River. Xiang River and Li River run in opposite directions: the former to the north and the latter to the south. They almost meet at the low point in the middle with a small hill separating them. This is Yuecheng jiao, the watershed of the two rivers. Due to the elevation difference of 4.34 metres, the water can only enter Xiang River if they dig the canal straight. Moreover, the place is so close to the headstream that the rainfall area is less than 3 square kilometres wide. It is impossible to draw enough water for the canal.

The ancient builders of the canal moved the drawing position to the upper part of Xiang River — Fenshui tang so that its water level rose to

1. In the early morning, women go to the canal bank to wash their clothes.

2. Kids playing on Yulin Dam.

3. Li River and Zi River originate from Cat Mountain.



3



1. The stream of people by Wanli Bridge of Water Street, shows the daily life of the residents.
2. The classic houses of Water Street.
3. Ling Canal has now become a popular park.
4. Centurial Glacial Karst Cave of Yanguan.

212.10 metres. The next step was to build a low dam across the river to raise the water level and dig a canal through Taishi Temple Hill of Ridge Yuechengjiao. By this, Xiang River enters Shi'an Shui — a branch of the Li River. The two river systems were finally connected.

#### **Doumen: the Earliest Sluice in the World**

Nowadays, Ling Canal has become an important local historical scenic site as well as a beautiful park with great water scenery. The park follows along the canal.

This is a herringbone dam, for preventing floods and rising water levels; it is the key part of Ling Canal. Built with thin blue stone, the backwater surface of the dam is squeezed with small stones and sands, which makes the surface tougher and slows down the water flow. Because it looks like fish scales, the dam is also called Yulin ('yu' meaning fish; 'lin' meaning scales) Dam.

The indispensable facility of both south and north canal is Doumen (Steep Gates). It is similar to a modern sluice. Simple as it may be, it is very convenient. Most of the existing Doumen have been restored, but the basic form doesn't change. Ling Canal's Doumen is the earliest sluice in the world, 1,000 years earlier than the sluice of Panama Canal.

#### **Xing'an: The Ancient Water Street**

After Yulin Dam, you will come to Water Street of Xing'an along Ling Canal. This ancient waterway is situated at Xing'an, the lower reaches of Ling Canal Project. There are many old bridges over the clean water. On both sides of the water are commercial streets one kilometre long with pseudo-classic buildings. Bars, restaurants and souvenir stalls stand one after another. At the end of the street is Qin City, which used to be the North Gate of ancient Xing'an and later, after restoration, became the new gate of Water Street. Walking





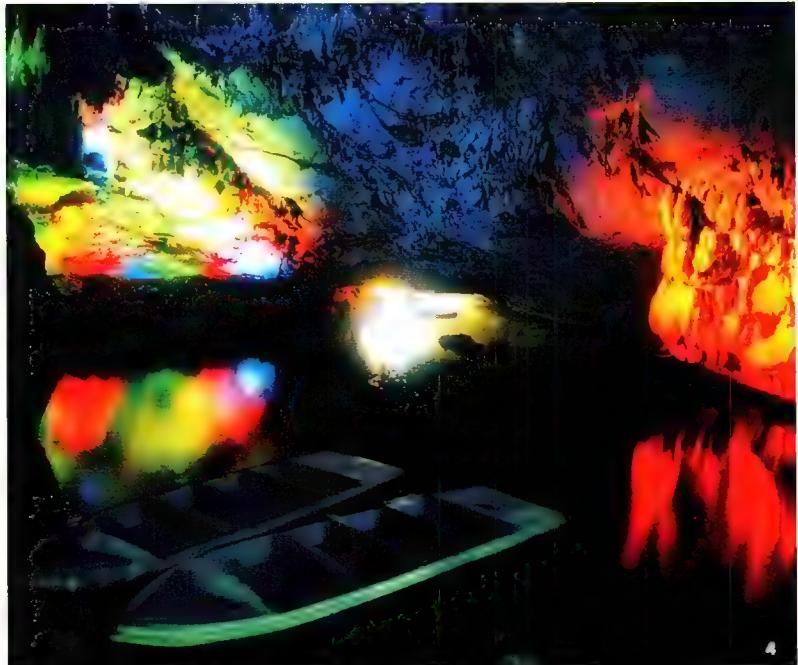
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along this historical street, you can feel traces of the Qin and Han culture, Central Plains culture, and Guangdong culture. Ancient bridges like Wanli Bridge, Masi Bridge and Sujia Bridge span the water. What's more, there are numerous stone inscriptions around the streets.

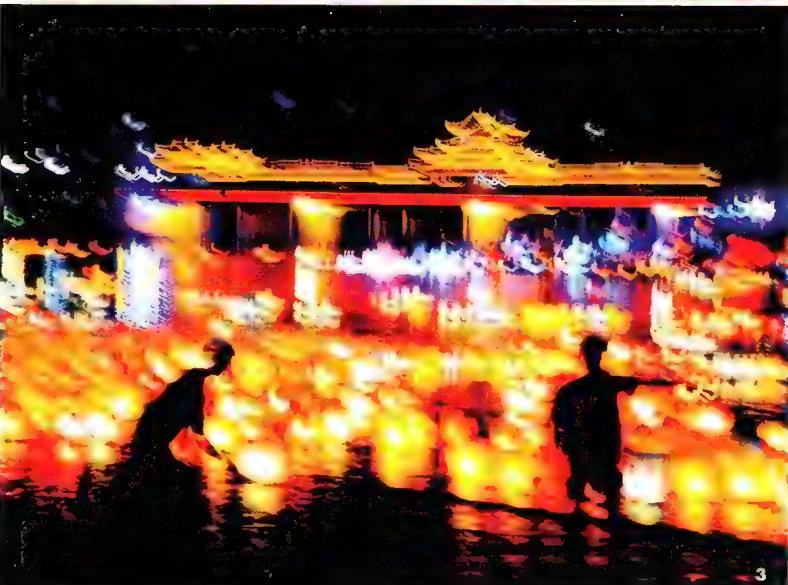
Water Street is free for both travellers and local residents. You can easily feel the daily life of the local people walking in the street. You will see residents wandering comfortably or walking with purpose. You will see farmers selling vegetables on Wanli Bridge, women washing clothes by the canal, and people fishing quietly. Water Street is another world at night. Bars of classic architectural flavour are opening.

### The Underground Ling Canal: Centurial Glacial Karst Cave

Along the canal to the west is Yanguan, which is very close to Xing'an County. It used to be a



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significant pass connecting to South Yue. There's a mysterious cave around Yanguan. The ancestors discovered it and found a subterranean stream there. The water comes from Ling Canal. It is said that some brave villagers entered the cave and caught a big catfish as big as one-metre-long. Now, you can still see the two big words 'You Yu' (meaning 'there's fish') on the wall in the cave which was left. Some went deeper with torches, trying to find treasures. When they came back, they said their journey had been very dangerous. In the time of the Anti-Japanese War, the cave was used to store food and provisions.

This legendary place was rediscovered just three years ago. Explorers entered it and were stunned by its beauty, naming it 'Centurial Glacial Karst Cave'. They also found traces of Quaternary Glacier Epoch. Three million years ago, the coming of the dry and cold Quaternary stopped the growth of stalactites. It was over 1.8 million years later when the climate turned warm and moist at the end of Quaternary that stalactites resumed developing. Thus, they appear in two parts, with the upper part brown in colour and the lower in milky white. This unique geological wonder adds to the cave's significance.

### The River Candle Festival: Thousands of River Candles Floating on Zi River

Ziyuan County is at the north of Xing'an. Zi River, cutting through the city, is the longest river in the county. Just like Li River, it also originates from Cat Mountain, from which it flows into Hunan Province and empties into Dongting Lake. It belongs to the Yangtze River system.

When we arrived at Ziyuan County, the annual Ziyuan River Candle Festival was in full swing. To put paper lamps on the river is a sacrificial ceremony of Ullabana Festival in Buddhism. This custom started in the early period of Qing Dynasty. At that time, Zi River was a crucial waterway from Guangxi to Hunan. The current was so swift that many people were killed each year. Paper lamps on the river serve to show the way for the spirits, helping them enter heaven. It later developed into a way of commemorating ancestors and worshipping gods. On the Ghost or Ancestor's Festival, the residents of Ziyuan County would burn incense sticks and float river candles for their ancestors. At the same time, villagers of the Miao and Yao People Region in Wupaishan would hold grand parties to praise the virtues of their fathers. People, would gather at rivers or bridges to sing folk songs to each other. This usually lasts for three days and nights.

Translated by He Huang



## Travel Tips

### To Zi River in Ziyuan County

**Transportation:** buses to Ziyuan are available every 20 minutes at Guilin Bus Terminal, 18 yuan / person, about two hours' travelling time.

**Accommodation:** there are over 20 hotels in Ziyuan County like Ziyuan Hotel, Guesthouse Hotel. Price for standard room is 80 ~120 yuan in winter season. Double room in ordinary hotels is 30 ~ 60 yuan.

**River rafting at Zi River:** take shuttle bus to No.2 dock in Ziyuan County, about 10 minutes, 70 yuan / person.

### Ling Canal of Xing'an, Water Street

**Transportation:** take bus from Guilin to Xing'an at Guilin Bus Station; fare is 12 yuan. about an hour distance. On arrival at Xing'an, you can rent a bike at the station for 1 yuan /person, or walk to Water Street.

**Ticket:** 30 yuan / person for Ling Canal. (two hours is needed to go around the park); for Water Street: free.

**Accommodation:** Xing'an Ling Canal Hotel (2-star): No.104 South Ling

Canal Road.

Tel. (0773) 6221 778

Yuan Hotel: Xing'an Railway Station Square. Tel. (0773) 219 5689

### Cat Mountain

**Transportation:** take bus from Guilin or Xing'an to Gaozhai at the foot of Cat Mountain. To ascend the mountain, you need to hire a car, 250 yuan for a round trip.

**Accommodation:**

Yunfeng Hotel is on the mountain. 60 yuan / person for basic double room. Cat Mountain Hotel: 238 yuan.

### Centurial Glacial Karst Cave

Xing'an County is 4 kilometres away in the north and Guilin is 50 kilometres to the south. From Guilin to Xing'an, there are buses to get there. You may also take a taxi. **Ticket:** 20 yuan.

1. During river rafting in Zi River, we pass the village of the Miao people. The local people welcome us warmly.

2. The daily life of the local people in Water Street. Sellers are washing their bean sprouts by the river.

3. During the River Candle Festival, staff put each lamp into the river carefully.

4. During the annual Ghost Festival, you can see countless river candles floating on the river.

# More Than a Hong Kong Man **Allan Zeman**

Photo Courtesy of Ocean Park & Hong Kong-China Tourism Photo Library Article by Cindy Lam

'Hong Kong people are hardworking, willing to gamble and not afraid of changes.' These words came not from a native Hong Kong man, but a renowned Hong Kong foreigner—Allan Zeman. His attachment to this place may be attributed to how these qualities perfectly match his own. Let's hear what Hong Kong has done to him, and more significantly, what he has done for Hong Kong.



### Some *background*...

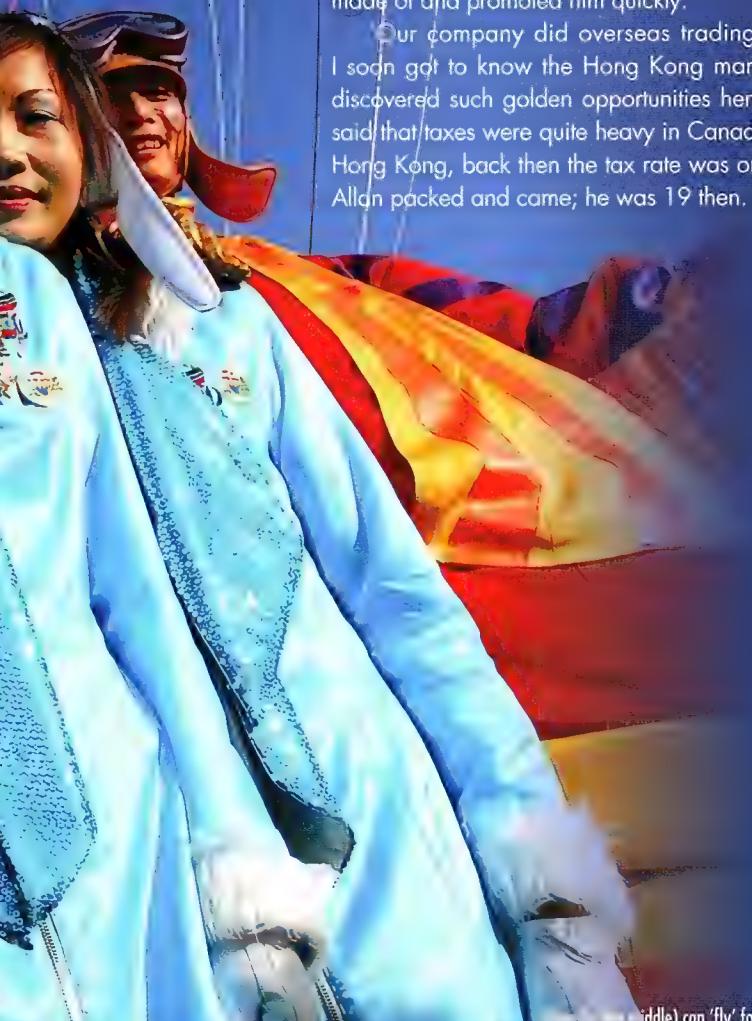
Allan was born in Germany, and raised in New York until he was eight, and then he moved to Canada. Finally, he ended up in Hong Kong and made his first million here. But of course, the 'money-making' talent started way back. When his father passed away, his mother took him to live in Quebec, Canada. To lessen the family burden, at the age of 13 he started to earn money.

'I delivered newspapers in the morning, worked part-time at restaurants on the weekends.' Earning CAD\$35 (HKD\$266) a week, he was making more money than some of his friends' parents. He was the first student in secondary school to have a car, at only 16.

He soon decided not to go to University. 'I figured that if you are not going to be a doctor or lawyer professions that require specific knowledge, you might as well skip university.' He knew what he was meant to be a businessman. 'I'd rather have work experience.'

So by the age of 17, he was already in the fashion business. The boss saw what the boy was made of and promoted him quickly.

Our company did overseas trading too, so I soon got to know the Hong Kong market, and discovered such golden opportunities here!' Allan said that taxes were quite heavy in Canada, but in Hong Kong, back then the tax rate was only 15%. Allan packed and came; he was 19 then.



(middle) can 'fly' for Ocean Park.



Father of Lan Kwai Fong

Here, he set up Colby, his first garment trading company. 'We exported clothes from China and Hong Kong to Canada and U.K., the profit was huge.'

Soon branches spread to Taiwan and Korea. He earned his first million a year later.

Allan sold Colby in 2001, 26 years after he set it up. It was worth 2.2 billion later.

### On *Lan Kwai Fong*

Lan Kwai Fong (Hong Kong's premiere dining and entertainment spot) is Allan's first Hong Kong legacy. As Allan was in the trade business, he got to know a lot of the U.S. buyers. 'These young people always complained to me — Hong Kong has no bars! They did not find the ones in the hotels convenient. So I thought, Hong Kong was metropolitan. New York had SoHo, Canada had Montreal, Hong Kong could have Lan Kwai Fong too.'

He set up his first restaurant, California. Being so close to the heart of Central, the Central Business District, it soon attracted celebrities. Once he got into in the business, he knew he had to learn the trade.

'I went to Tokyo and saw how they ran restaurants. I discovered many of them were above ground floor. Hong Kong's land is as expensive as Tokyo, I thought, we could do the same too,' Allan came back and bought an entire building in Lan Kwai Fong for 32 million. He turned the offices in the building into restaurants and let them. Now he owns 17 restaurants in the area.



### On Ocean Park

Ocean Park is his second Hong Kong legacy. And it was quite different from Lan Kwai Fong. The latter gave him the reputation of a smart businessman. The former gave him a benevolent one. First, his business suit became a sea animal costume. Then, he turned from moneymaking for himself to helping Hong Kong make money.

'It all started when Tung Chee Hwa called me,' Allan said, mentioning the former Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR. 'We have been friends for many years, since before he was the CE of Hong Kong. His wife loved one of my restaurants.'

Ocean Park was facing a crisis then. 'It was losing money. Some people suggested closing it down, some suggested moving it. The government didn't know what to do. Free up the land or what?' The land was a prime site worth billions. 'Tung asked if I could help. I have never been to Ocean Park. I turned him down but he kept calling six times straight. So I thought, fine, I will go and have a look.'

Allan did not make any promises. He went. And he found it amazing. 'I got on the cable car and wow, the view! I thought, don't be silly, you can't close or move the park. People said less and less people come here because of the remote location. But I thought, the location was what made it unique.'

Allan said, this was his philosophy — turning the negative into positive. 'I knew exactly what to do. Ocean Park was like an old lady, it just needed a face-lift to become attractive again.'

He went to Ocean Park a few times before he decided to accept Tung's offer. 'I knew the management there was mainly people from the hotel industry. Anyway, they did not know why this guy was coming nor did they like the idea of me walking around and asking questions. I asked them why they didn't repaint the pavement and other things. They said it required money, and there were no guarantees. The problem was clear. They were unwilling to further invest in anything.'

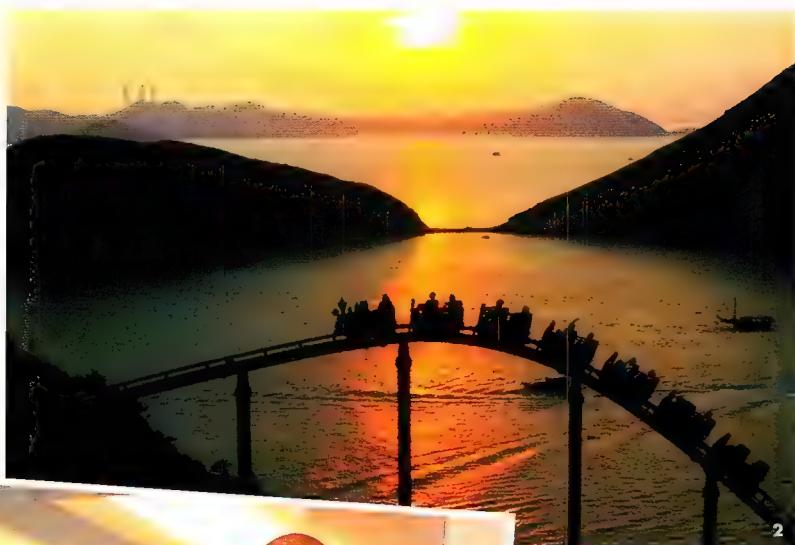
Allan knew he could turn things around, so he called Tung and accepted — purely as a volunteer job, that is, without pay.

### ■ The strategies ■

Here comes of the story of how a man saves a big Hong Kong brand — Ocean Park. This is a story, and more than that, an interesting lesson told by the 'Mouse Killer' (against Disney, as described by Forbes) too.

#### ■ Human resources

'First things first. The park needed a new revitalisation plan. The existing management then



we knew they had all the fantasy stuff but we had the real. They had a fake mouse; we had real animals! They had a space mountain; we had real mountains! They had fairy tales; we had real scenery! So I knew we should focus on education and entertainment.'

'I'm a businessman and I've never seen real dolphins face-to-face. The first time I saw them in Ocean Park, I was so excited. This was where all the meaning of Ocean Park lay. To let people see real animals that they would never see in their entire lives.'

'Edutainment was the key. We had all what Mother Nature gave us! I asked the new design team not to worry about the money. Just draw the diagrams, plan the new stuff as beautiful as you can. You must always aim higher than what you want to achieve, or else you can never get there.'

### 3 Get the money –

#### how to convince government officials

'After planning, we calculated the budget and profit. We needed \$5.55 million. So first, we have to borrow money from the bank. We had to convince the government to pay the deposit first.'

'I started calling the Executive Council members, one by one by myself. Tung, Donald Tsang, Rafael Hui and more, many of which I had to call a few times. I invited them to come one by one, so they could focus and feel on their own.' So altogether Allan presented the plan to people over 10 times.

'I placed the presentation — all the powerpoints at the other end of the cable car ride. So they had to go all the way up to see it. I wanted them to experience what I experienced, see the stunning view and feel the park's uniqueness before I unfolded the proposal to them.' The proposal suggested that within 12 to 15 years, the park



1. Restaurants and bars at Lan Kwai Fong. (by Hou He Liang)

2. Ocean Park has a splendid sea view. (by David Mo)

3. Allan with the new panda dolls in his office.

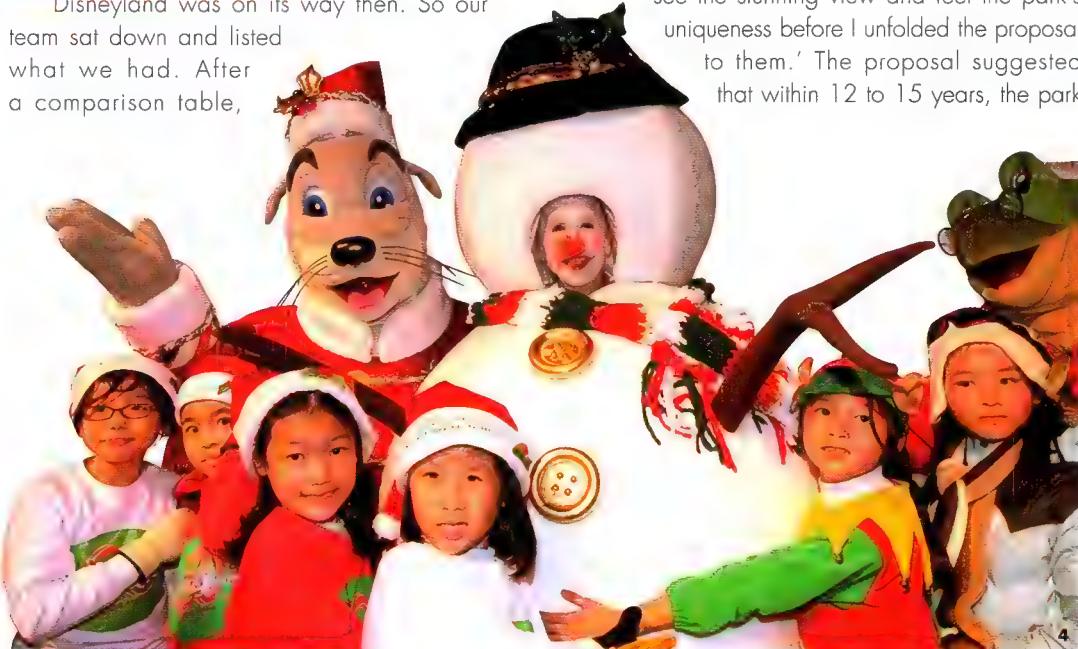
4. Allan in Christmas kick-off.

was mainly appointed and from the hotel industry. But I needed theme park experts. I went abroad to invite Thomas J. Mehrmann, who is presently the Ocean park CEO. I employed him immediately the first time we met — no administrative procedures. He had 27 years of theme-park experience.'

'The park desperately needed a fresh look. An old lady doesn't have sex appeal, does she? So I also hired a team of designers from Los Angeles, who had worked for Universal Studios and Disney.'

### 2 The plan — aim high

'Disneyland was on its way then. So our team sat down and listed what we had. After a comparison table,





could have a gross profit. Before that, it would create job opportunities and they would fight for MTR extension to the park. The plan was easy to understand and Allan exuded confidence of its execution.

#### 4 To sustain, is to change

'They liked it and so the government approved the funding. We used to borrow the first loan from 25 banks.'

'After all the renovations, the park looks increasingly better. But we must sustain it and in order to keep the people coming, we must include something new once in a while. Return visits are important. So I thought we should consistently introduce different events. The first one was Halloween. I

took this idea from Lan Kwai Fong. It was what I did, introducing this festival to Hong Kong, and now, to a different target group.' Ocean Park now arranges special events every two months. Allan also introduced all the new things coming: Aqua City, Polar Adventure, Goldfish, Red Pandas, and three hotels. By 2014, they'll all be here.

#### 5 The fruit ripens

What Allan said about introducing new things really has continued all these years. We always see him in the newspaper, once in a while in an animal costume, or dramatically rescued by animals. He has the knack of deftly informing people what is happening at Ocean Park. It seems like the park has got all the Zeman essence, full of energy and excitement. 'It is receiving 4.8 million visitors a year.'

Now, profits do not only depend on the admission tickets, which used to be the case. 'Restaurants and souvenirs also helped to boost the profit, each contributing 25%. That goes back to the Allan Zeman's business — catering. Theme Parks are not just play and fun. People have to eat here! And we are selling many dolls and souvenirs.' Two little panda dolls are actually sitting right behind him in his office.

Aim high, and he made it. He pledged he wouldn't let Ocean Park be the No. 2 park in town. Furthermore, people started to love him not just because of what he achieved for our park. But he is doing it himself, making it happen both in front and behind the scenes.



1. Cable cars in Ocean Park.
2. Souvenirs now constitute 25% of the profit.
3. Allan in costumes for seasonal events.
- 4,5. In the recent press event, Allan was 'rescued' by sea animals.
6. His upcoming Phuket villa model in his office.

### On Hong Kong, China and Tourism

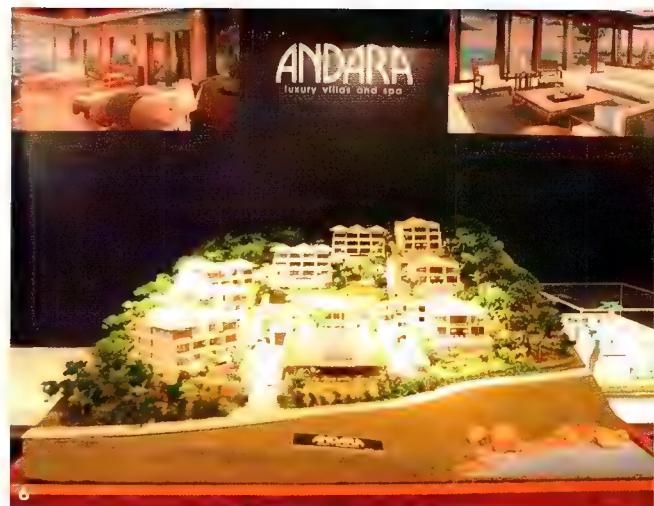
Allan gave Lan Kwai Fong fame, and he did so to Ocean Park too. We often hear about bar streets elsewhere, mimicking Lan Kwai Fong. But the most updated 'Hong Kong Brand' in tourism now is Ocean Park.

'Dubai, Shanghai, Saudi Arabia and more have contacted us, asking for franchising opportunities of an aqua-themed park.' The success is worldwide for Hong Kong.

'I really want all good for Hong Kong,' Allan said. 'I do this simply because I treat this as home and Ocean Park is an important part of Hong Kong.' Plus, he is doing this free of charge—the thinking, and the presenting. Our reporters have always talked about Allan being so extreme in press kick-offs. He might paint himself in vibrant colours, fly up into the sky, throw himself into the water — there is little he wouldn't do. Once, one of us saw him climbing up onto a Christmas sleigh and roll downhill over ten times — just so that the press would have a nicer shot.

Recently, he appeared in his suit. People thought, oh, he isn't doing anything this time. While we were still pondering, he jumped into the water — with his Armani suit on. The sea animals saved him and helped him with artificial respiration. We all regretted to have underestimated him. The 'can-do' spirit in him just never dies.

'I find this part of me bears resemblance with the people here. The Chinese are willing to gamble, not afraid of change, quickly adaptable, and



very hardworking.'

Then how about the big China?

'Before Hong Kong people started their investments in China, I knew there are a bright future. I started business in Chengsha, Hunan Province many, many years ago. China was only starting to open up then. I knew it was where Mao Zedong came from. With that, I knew Chengsha had to be the new head office.' Now, Allan has opened restaurants and bars in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Zhuhai.

He is attached to Hong Kong and China, not just in the business sense. 'I have my eyes open for all the changes taking place here.'

Outside China, Allan also has a villa in Phuket, where he invested in many restaurants too. 'It's a place like Hong Kong, where things are mostly tourist-related.' He likes Phuket a lot, and whenever he has time, he takes a holiday here.

Ever thought of moving there? 'No, never, I won't leave Hong Kong for long.' Not a surprising answer once you know this man enough.

### Hong Kong

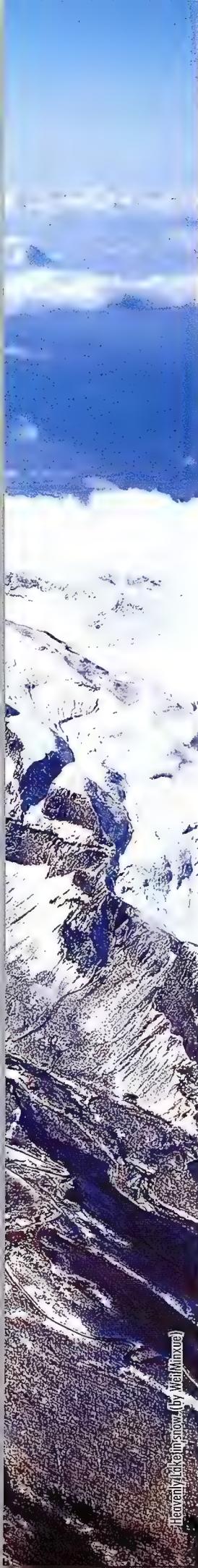
Allan wasn't like other foreigners, listing certain parts of Hong Kong, or a particular bit of Chinese culture as his favourites. He spoke of Hong Kong as part of himself.

At one point during the interview, he slipped in the line, 'I'm actually doing a lot for Hong Kong, way more than you know.' But he stopped here and did not boast of it. Later, I went online and saw his non-business-related titles on Wikipedia—member of Tourism Commission and Urban Renewal Authority, Executive of The Community Chest... and I thought of the name cards he gave me — chairperson of Ocean Park, Lan Kwai Fong, Wynn Resorts, how could he do all of these at the same time? One interview just can't cover all of this man.



# Climbing the Changbai Mountains

## Along the Border of China and North Korea

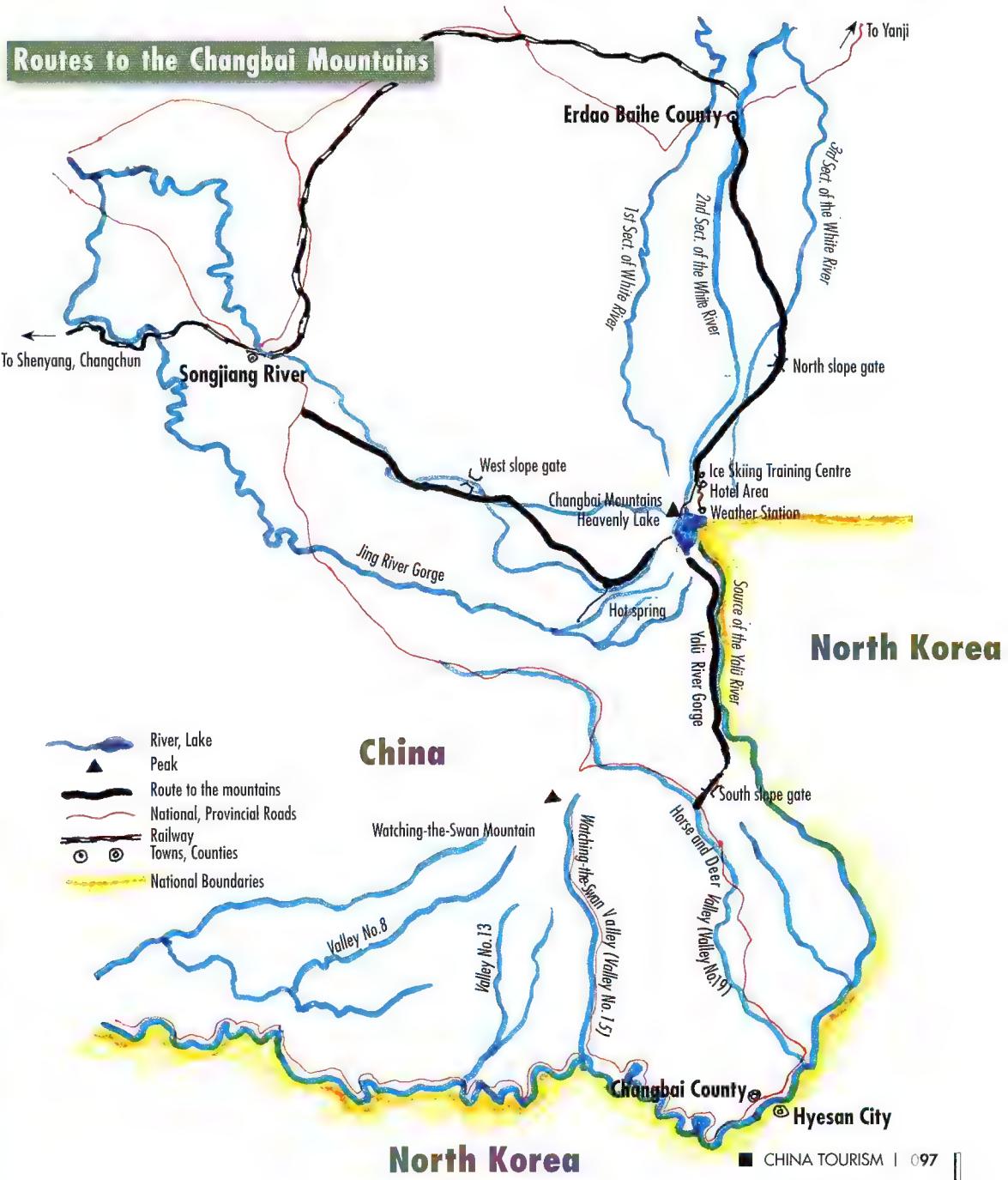


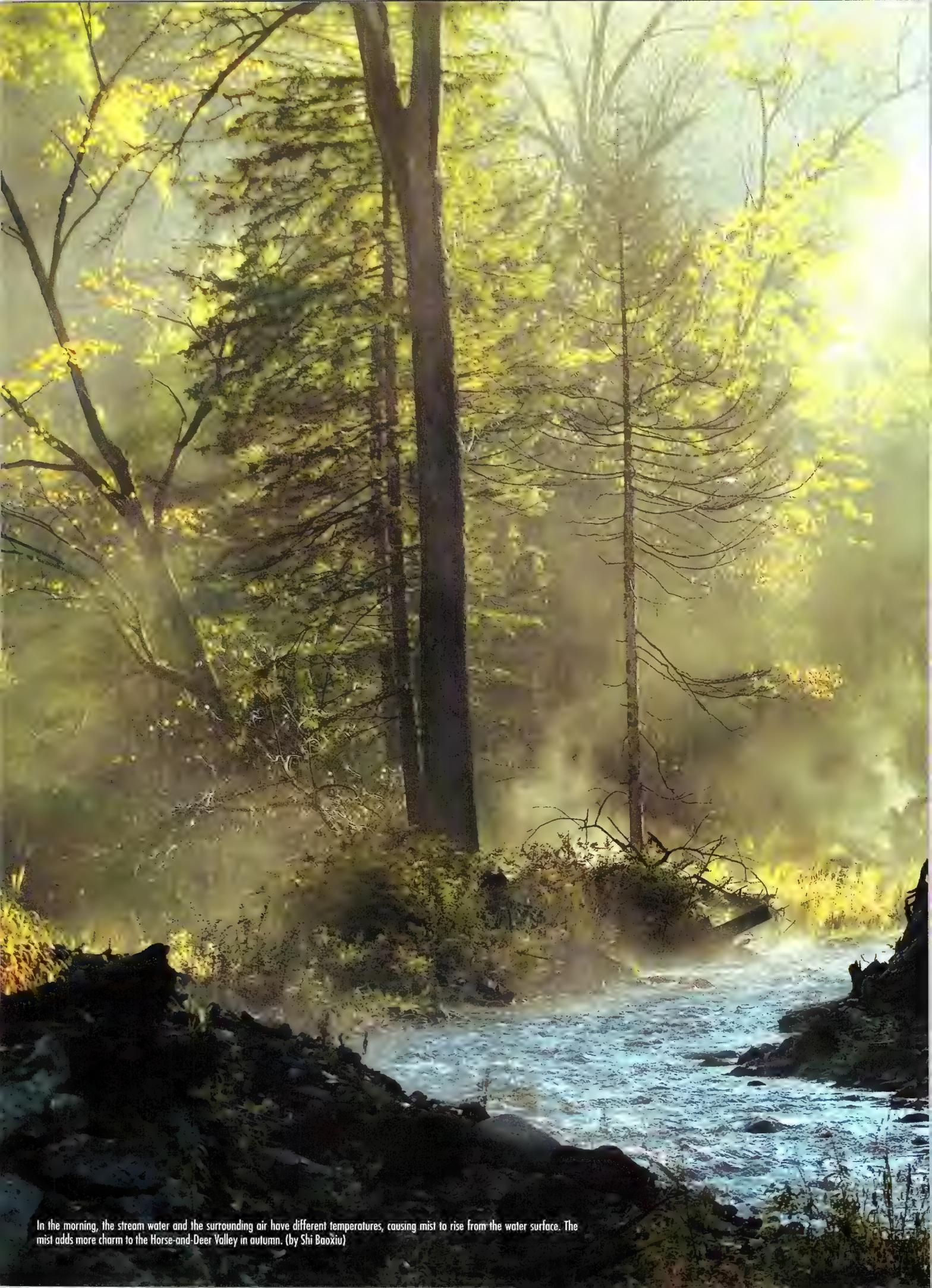
The Changbai Mountains (literally meaning Perpetually White Mountains) are the highest mountains in northeast China, as well as having China's highest dormant volcano. The deep, crystal-clear Heavenly Lake (Tian Chi) atop the mountains, covering the once-furious crater, is also the source of two big rivers, Songhua and Yalü.

Most people visit the high peaks of Changbai in summer to escape the severe heat. Autumn is also an optimum time of year. During winter however, there are only a few visitors. Personally, I think the snow-capped mountains are most charming.

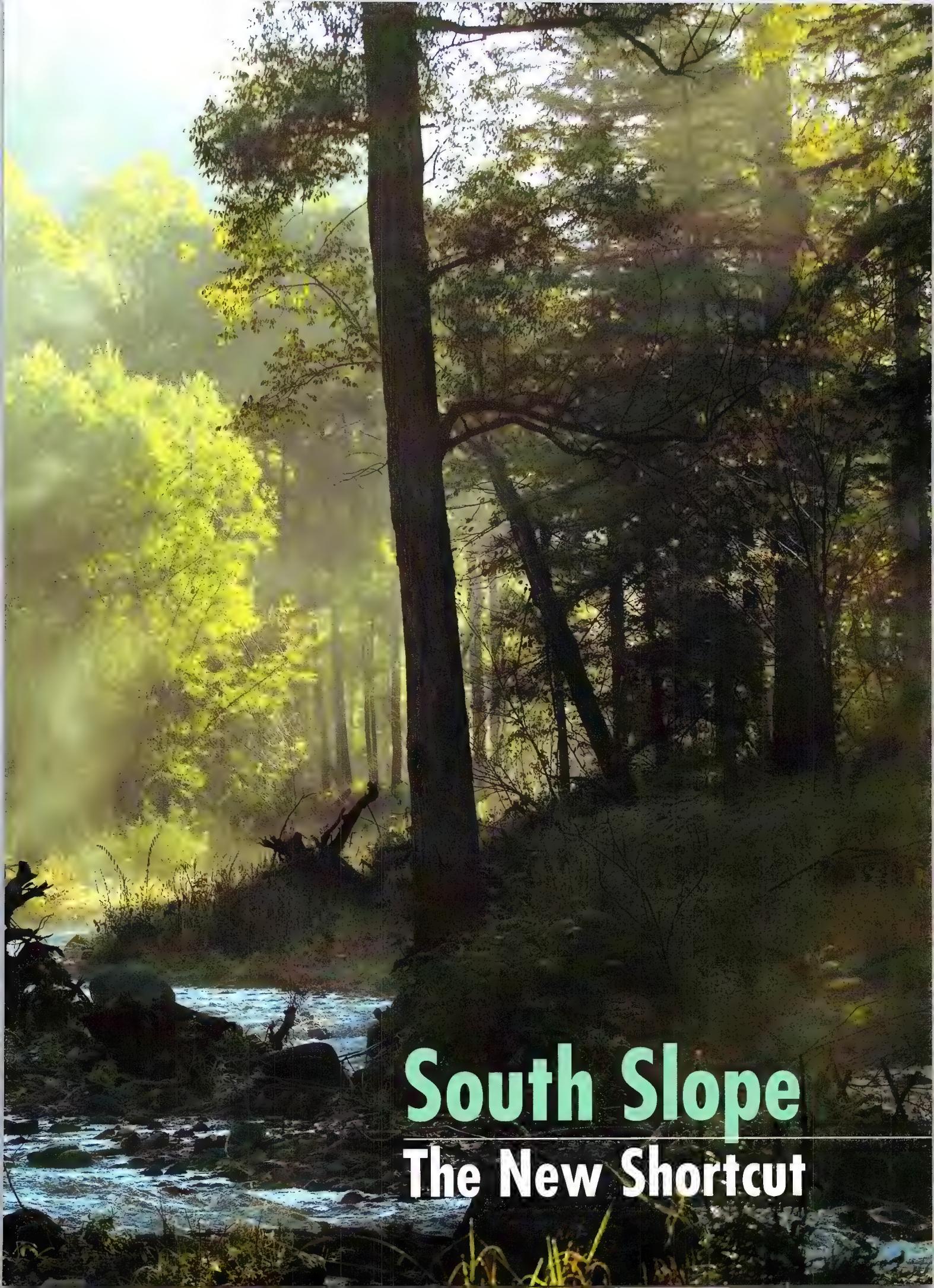
Generally people start climbing the mountains from the north or west slopes. Before it was officially opened last July, the south slope was mostly restricted to the public as it has sat on the border between China and North Korea. Visitors now can take a cableway direct to the mountaintop, from where they can overlook Heavenly Lake.

Photos by Wei Minxue, Yu Guozhi, Lang Qi, Shi Baoxiu, et al. Article by Shi Baoxiu





In the morning, the stream water and the surrounding air have different temperatures, causing mist to rise from the water surface. The mist adds more charm to the Horse-and-Deer Valley in autumn. (by Shi Baoxiu)



**South Slope**  
**The New Shortcut**

I didn't know about the south slope of the Changbai Mountains before I came to Jilin Province in late September last year. I overheard a friend saying that the south slope was newly opened to the public and that the scenery was amazingly beautiful. It was a nice surprise for me as I am interested in anything new, adventurous and unexpected. This new route was very tempting.

Actually the south slope was officially opened to public in July 2007. It is the only route where visitors can take a car to Heavenly Lake and it's the easiest and cheapest. Moreover, there is a diversity of flora and fauna along the changing terrain of the slope.

### Colourful Horse and Deer Valley

It's nearly 500 km from Changchun, the capital city of Jilin Province, to Changbai County. From Changchun, the scenery changes from plains to hills and finally to undulating mountains. The mountains rise up and the forests get denser when in Changbai County at the southern foot of the Changbai Mountains. The leaves along the Horse and Deer

(Malu) Valley had already turned red, maybe due to the low temperatures here. Coniferous and broadleaf trees thrive everywhere, contributing to the gorgeous rich colours here. The altitude is most likely suitable for their growth. Upon seeing this, I couldn't help taking a lot of pictures.

Some of the conifers found here include Korean pines, Changbai larches, Changbai pines and yews, while the broadleaf trees include elms, birches and poplars. There is also a large variety of bushes, including nut trees, *Corylus mandshurica Maxim*, Siberian Ginseng and rosebushes. The herbs hidden in the forest are even more varied; some are over one metre tall, while some are only as tall as a person's palm. Surprisingly, some subtropical vines, such as wild grapes and Chinese magnolia vine, are also found here and they are as densely distributed here as they are in some subtropical forests. When most of the deciduous pines turn yellow, the vibrant mountains give visitors a strong visual effect.

### A River Links Two Worlds

That night I stayed in the Changbai

County. I went to the Yalu riverside early the next morning. I was told a long time ago that one can see North Korea on the other side of the river, and sure enough, I clearly saw North Korea across the river: people wearing simple clothes, mostly walking in a hurry, while some were pushing carts, or riding bicycles or donkey carts on dusty roads. After a long time, a shabby bus came to pick up a few passengers and drove away.

The city on other side is built on a mountain slope. It is filled with identical residential buildings. Colourful billboards, neon lights and clothing could hardly be seen from afar. The only coloured spots that could be seen were either slogans to praise the Party and Party leaders, or the portraits and statues of the country's former and current presidents Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.

The sun rose, shining brightly on the river, above which rose the mist. At that time, two simply dressed Korean women came to the riverside with bamboo baskets on their heads. They squatted down. Then I heard some rattling noise, but the river was laden with heavy mist,



so I couldn't see what they were doing. I guessed that they were beating clothes with wooden clubs. This primitive way of washing clothes is rarely seen in China now. Since it is such a simple living environment on the upper reaches of the river, the water here must be very clean.

The Yalu River flows southward into the Pacific Ocean. The geographical and meteorological conditions on either side of the river have only slight differences, however, the daily life of the people living on both banks differ substantially.

### Watching-the-Swan Valley A Geological Museum

There are many valleys on the south slope of Changbai Mountains. We have been to the Horse-and-Deer Valley, the

1. A distant view of the Changbai Mountains. The trees are blanketed by snow. (by Sun Gang)

2. Hyesan in North Korea and Changbai County in China are separated by a river. (by Shi Baoxiu)

3. Korean minorities in Changbai County like to hold their wedding ceremonies in the traditional-style villages near the county proper. (by Shi Baoxiu)

4. Across from the port of Changbai County in China stands a huge flag and a statue of Kim Il-sung. (by Shi Baoxiu)





longest among all, at about 50 km. The Changbai County map shows that from southwest to northeast, there are valleys No. 1, No. 2, No. 3... all the way to 20. Many other ones don't even have a name. All the valleys are densely covered by trees, with streams and brooks running through the forests and eventually into the Yalü River.

Valley No. 15, nicknamed 'Watching-the-Swan Valley', is about 40 km away from Changbai County proper. It is connected to the second highest peak of the Changbai Mountains.

Upon entering the valley, I saw just how wide it was. As I continued walking deeper into the valley, it became

narrower and narrower, drawing the mountains much closer to me. Continuing to go deeper, I found bare stone pillars on both banks of the river, some lined up to form a 10 to 20 m long cliff and some standing in clusters. While some seemed to be twisted by a special force, leaning towards the same direction. When we stopped to rest, we looked up and saw the exposed cross-section of stone pillars. Each of them was hexagonal in shape and looked like a bee hive. These naturally formed stone pillars are made of basalt.

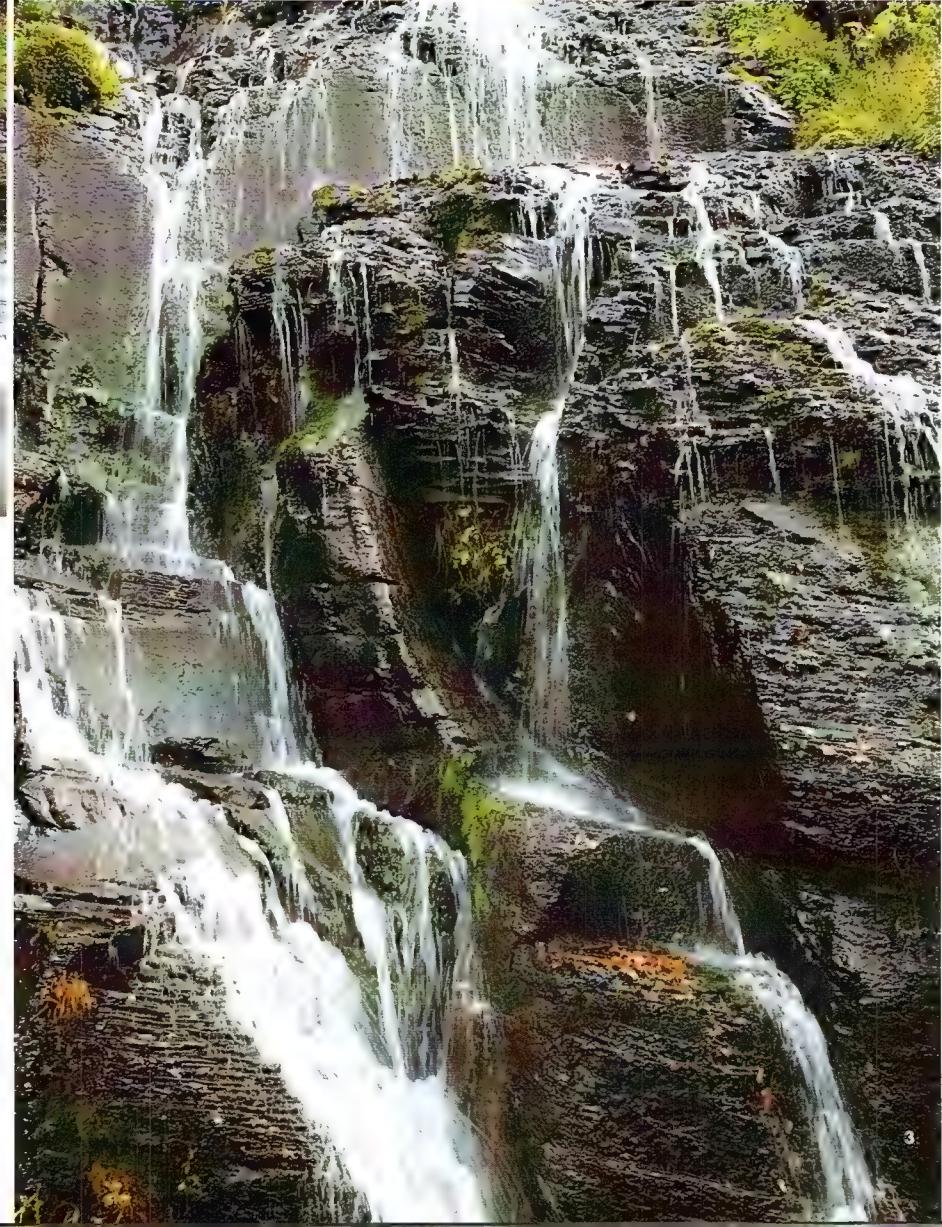
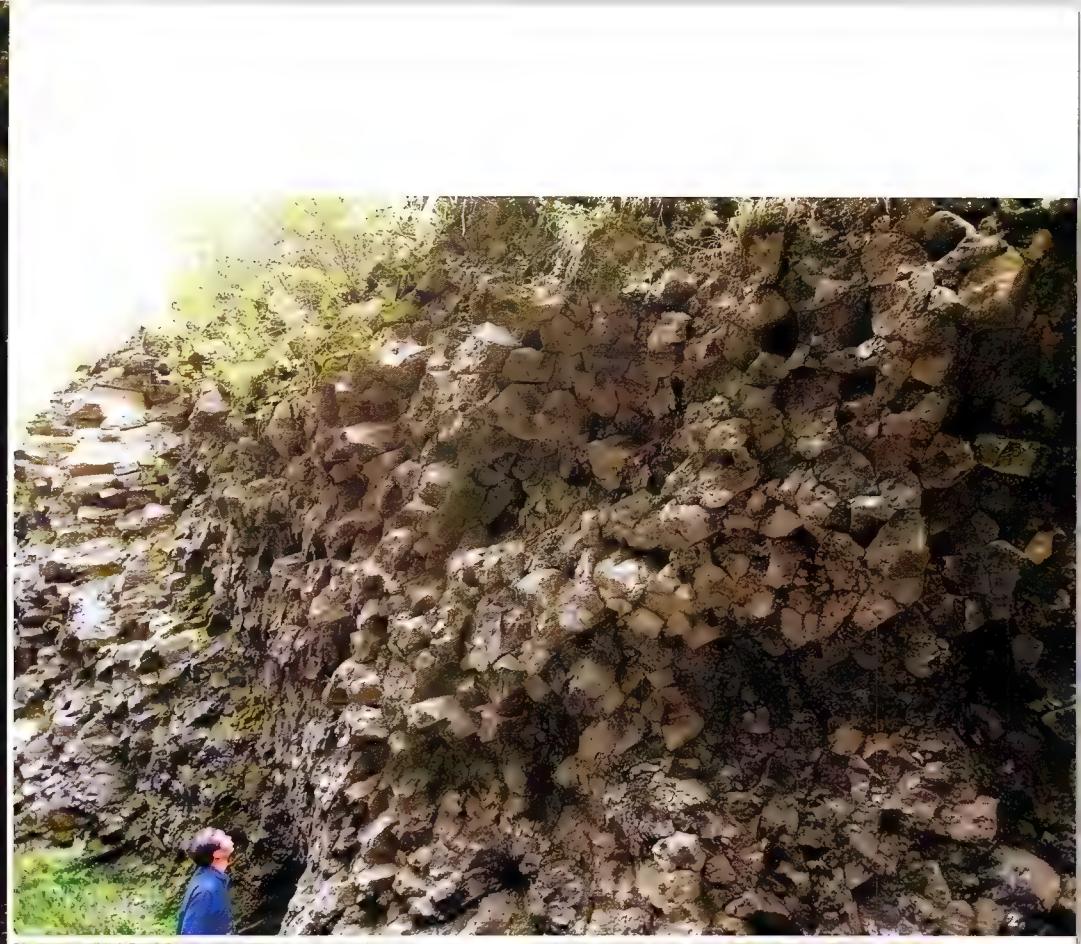
I guess that the Watching-the-Swan Valley was formed by lava when the mountain erupted eons ago. This too is

the case for the Changbai Mountains. The basalt became exposed by earthquakes and serves as testament to the eruptions.

Later I found that the main peak in the Watching-the-Swan Valley is the second highest peak in northeast China. This peak, connected to the Changbai Mountains, is actually a basalt cone shaped by erupting lava. These two dormant volcanoes constructed the Changbai Range's ridge. The Watching-the-Swan Valley is rich in volcanic resources.

### **The Sino-North Korean Boundary Is just a Stream**

The third day, I got up very early



and left Changbai County at 5 am. Looking at the opposite bank, it was very dark; in comparison, my side was so bright. I assumed that North Korea was restricted in its use of electricity due to a lack of energy.

A while later we entered the Horse-and-Deer Valley again. Everything was veiled in the morning mist. The moon would soon set in the west; while the sun radiated crimson lights on North

1. The most attractive scene in the Watching-the-Swan Valley is the huge, steep and evenly lined basalt cliff. (by Shi Baoxiu)

2. These basalt columns have been distorted by huge forces, exposing their hexagonal cross-sections. (by Shi Baoxiu)

3. The Watching-the-Swan Valley is famous for its waterfalls. It boasts more than 100 falls. (by Shi Baoxiu)



Korea to the east.

When we arrived at the mountain gate of the south slope of Changbai Mountains, it was 7 am and the sky was still grey. It seemed that our plan to take pictures of sunrise might fail. Through the mist, we saw a stream flowing along

the side of the road. It was so narrow a person could jump across it. The driver told me, this stream was the upper section of the Yalu River; and across from it was North Korea. Therefore, we were actually walking along the borderline between China and North Korea.



When the fog dispersed, a row of concrete poles appeared in front of us on the left side of the stream. Each one was 'T-shaped'. The driver said this was the newly built national defence line; there was no such thing before. It was built for the people living on the other side of the defence line, who had no food when winter came; so they would stealthily cross the border and sneak into the village on this side to steal food. They would even block people's doors so no one inside the house could come out if they heard anything.

### Yalu River Gorge

We drove along the mountain road to the precipitous cliff of the Yalu River Gorge. From there we overlooked Yalu

1. In autumn, at the foot of Changbai Mountains, red leaves can be seen everywhere. (by Wei Minxue)

2. In the area of the upper reaches of the Yalu River, concrete posts with iron nets are set up in Chinese territory to prevent the North Koreans from crossing the border. (by Shi Baoxian)

3. The Yalu River Gorge is a natural borderline between China and North Korea. (by Lang Qi)





River winding through the gorge. The land at the bottom of the gorge is densely covered by tall pines and birches. There are some grey stone columns projecting from the cliffs, like crocodile teeth. It is said that the gorge is a fissure caused by an eruption more than 300 years ago.

### A Vertical Botanical Garden

On the Changbai Mountains, no matter which route you take, you'll see vertically distributed vegetation. The lower part of the mountain is below 1,200 m above sea level, with comparatively flat terrain and a mild climate. As the soil here is thick, the plants are mostly broadleaf trees, alternating with some pines and Chinese firs. The tallest trees are the Korean pines, which grow to about 30 m. Going up from here, the temperature drops 6 degrees every 1 km.

Between 1,200 and 1,800 m above sea level is the coniferous forest which mainly consists of Korean pines, firs and larches. In summer, the entire forest is green; while in autumn, the larches turn golden in contrast with the other green trees. After that, their leaves fall off and they become the only barren trees in the coniferous forest.

In the area between 1,800 and 2,000 m above sea level, even the enduring pines and firs can't survive. This



area is high in both altitude and latitude, and is lashed by severe wind. The only trees surviving in such severe conditions are Gold Birch (*B. ermanii*).

### Gold Birch Survivors on Barren Land

After our car drove around seven or eight bends, the green vegetation suddenly disappeared and there were only leafless trees surrounded by dry, wild grasses. It turned out that we had already arrived at the gold birch forest.



Unlike slim, straight and smooth-skinned white birches, gold birch trees are crooked and ugly, with twisted roots, white trunks and cracked bark. Their dreadful appearance is due to the severe environment.

This part of the Changbai Mountains is the bottom of the volcano cone. It is steep, with bare rocks and barren land. In addition, the temperature averages between 10 and 14°C and in winter it drops to -30° C.



and the wind-chill factor increases to scale 8 or even higher.

Changbai Mountain is very high. Ice and snow on its summit will not melt until June. During this time, gold birches start sprouting. They are the most beautiful in summer when they are surrounded by green grasses and colourful flowers, like azalea. Some spots on the shady side of the mountain still have snow. The snow mixed with the azalea paints a beautiful scene.

However, this period is short. In late September before the first snow comes, the trees shred all their leaves, waiting for the freezing winter.

In this gold birch forest, we couldn't find any big trees. The higher we climbed, the shorter and slimmer these trees became. Apart from heavy wind, cold weather and the barren landscape, another thing that causes the trees' haggard shape is, more than 300 years ago, the Changbai Mountains suffered

from a drastic eruption which swallowed almost the entire gold birch forest. The trees we saw had sprouted after the disaster. Geologists assume this dormant volcano erupts every 300 years.

1. From 1,800 to 2,000 m above sea level, even pines and firs that are tolerant of the cold can't survive; only extremely strong gold birches are left. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. The rough, cracked gold birch tree bark is testament to the extreme weather. (by Shi Baoxiu)
3. Although leaves have fallen, trees stand firm against the snow. (by Shi Yongting)



### Species Close to the Ground

We went up to the tundra area after the gold birch forest. The originally colourful carpet-like plants had already turned brown. Only azalea living close to the ground retained its shining green hue. This area is over 2,500 m above sea level. Here in the Central Plains (comprising the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River) it feels like mid-winter.

Powerful winds seemed almost able

to pierce through our bones and blow us away. I stumbled my way to the edge of the cliff to look over the mountain. However, I didn't dare to stand right on the edge as the wind might blow me off. Then I lay down on my chest on the ground covered by moss and grasses, viewing the scenery a few miles away. This is the best place to get a panoramic view of the changing vegetation.

### As Smooth as a Mirror

Up from the tundra area is the top of the volcano cone with even less vegetation. We drove higher up the mountain along the spiralling roads until we saw this desolate place, completely covered by grey stones. These stones had most likely spewed out from deep inside the crust by the eruption. This place looks like the barren, lifeless surface of the moon. After a while, we finally arrived



It's very rare to have such a sunny day around Heavenly Lake. (by Wei Minxue)

### A Dormant Volcano

Changbai Mountains is a typical dormant volcano. More than 15 million years ago, it was beneath a vast sea. Later, due to the earth's movement, the bottom of this area rose and surfaced from the sea. Today's mountains, Heavenly Lake and surrounding hotsprings took shape after many eruptions. History has recorded that Changbai Mountain erupted from 1199 to 1201. This eruption was said to be the biggest in the world going as far back as 2,000 years. Some volcanic dust even landed on northern Japan. The most recent activity was on April 14, 1702 (the 11th year during Emperor Kangxi's reign).

Dr. Wei Haiquan who works with the Institute of Geology in the China Earthquake Administration, once made a scientific prediction about the Heavenly Lake Volcano's

eruption. He believes that even a medium- or small-sized eruption could hit the Erdao Baihe County (second-section White River County) hard from 50 km away and in only 20 minutes. If it is huge in magnitude and laid dormant for a millennium, it could be fatal for Erdao Baihe, Changbai, Chongshan, Liangjiang, Hongshi, Fengman and other counties.

The China Earthquake Administration has been testing and surveying the Heavenly Lake volcanic area on the Changbai Mountains for years. Experts said that very few volcanoes in the world which have lain dormant for years will erupt again. Geophysical probing proves that under the Changbai Mountains there is a magma reservoir which makes it possible it could erupt in the future. When it erupts, it'll be more destructive than ever due to the 2 billion tonnes of water stored in Heavenly Lake.

at the parking lot where there were small houses, a platform and fences.

The wind blew even stronger; to the point of howling. I'd never heard such a scary noise. I remember the snowstorm and gales I once experienced in the Gobi Desert outside Yangguan in Dunhuang of Gansu Province were nowhere near as strong as this one. I tried to open the car door many times and it was pushed back by the wind. I finally had to push it hard with my shoulder and squeezed out of the narrow crack. Outside was even colder than I expected. My sweaters and thick wool pants couldn't protect me from the heavy wind. It felt like I had fallen into an icy hole. I hurried back into the car; otherwise I would have frozen. Fortunately, our driver carried several green military cotton-padded coats to us. We put them on before we dared to step out again.

The Heavenly Lake is about 200 m away from the parking lot. We pushed our way against the wind to the mountain pass. The road is covered by large and small black stones. Each one is permeated with countless tiny holes. These foam-like stones are the remains of the lava that erupted over 300 years ago. Many visitors take one or two home as a souvenir.

Interestingly, beside the rocky road, there is a red plastic band that starts from the mountaintop and extends to the cliff edge and down to Heavenly Lake. On one side of the belt stands a wooden board on which it says, 'China-North Korean border, no trespassing!' Although there is a white concrete mere stone set up in the middle of the Viewing Platform, no one really cares about it and people trespass anyway as there are no national defence guards; it's really lax!

When we approached the mountain pass and the cliff, a vast blue lake appeared in front of us. The lake is surrounded by more than 10 astonishingly steep peaks. The mirror-like lake reflects the sky. Everything here felt so mysterious, like a ghost world in a fairy tale.

Heavenly Lake on Changbai Mountains is a volcanic crater that has been dormant for 300 years. At 2,691 m above sea level, this lake is the deepest in China. It averages a depth of 204 m and

at its deepest, is 373 m. The Changbai Mountains belongs to both China and North Korea. The main peak, the Baitou (White Head) Mountain, stands in North Korea's territory. The weather around Heavenly Lake is mostly cloudy and foggy, so not everyone is lucky to see the real lake. I am one of the lucky ones.

### Turned White in a Second

The wind was blowing harder and stronger. It felt as sharp as a knife cutting my skin and I couldn't help shivering. Suddenly, something cold started hitting on my face; it turned out to be snow flakes. Dark clouds quickly gathered in the sky, blocking the view of Heavenly Lake. I followed other unprepared visitors and returned to the parking lot. Then,

packing into our car, we rushed towards the foot of the mountain. When we arrived at the gold birch forest, the road had already turned white. By the time we got to the coniferous forest, everything was covered with snow. I looked back and saw that the clouds were still floating above the mountaintop like a Chinese farmer's bamboo hat sitting on his head.

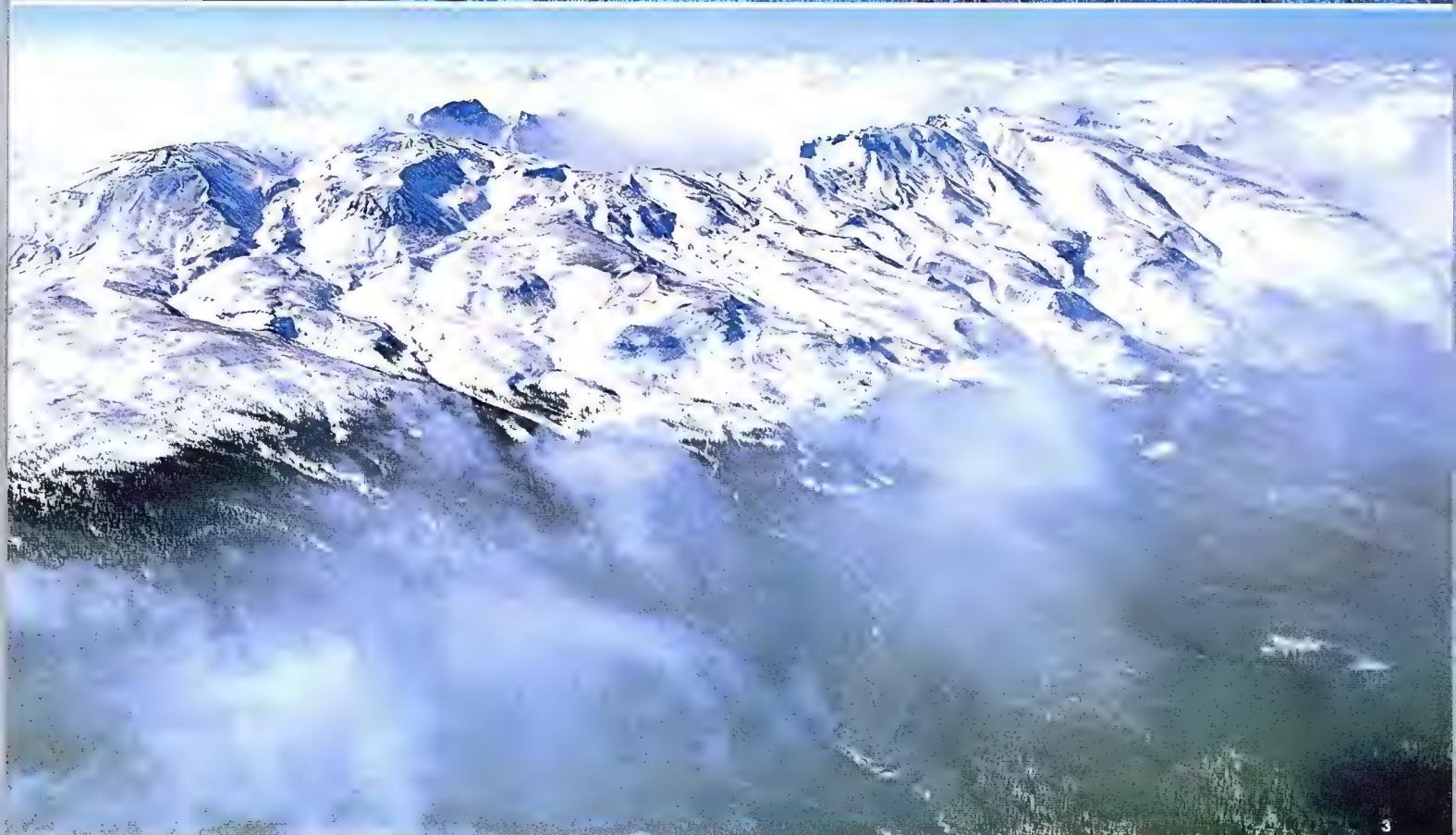
As it was snowing more and more heavily, everything was white and we could hardly tell the sky from the land...

1. Unique lava topography on the top of the south slope. (by Shi Baoxiu)

2. The trees on Changbai Mountains are covered by snow. (by Wei Minxue)

3. Heavenly Lake of Changbai Mountains in snow. (by Lang Qi)







# North Slope

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## The Best Route to Enjoy the Snowy Winter



The Changbai Mountains have a very long winter, lasting six months from the end of September to the next April. Most of the time the mountain is blanketed in thick snow, and the snow on the peaks takes seven to eight months to fully melt.

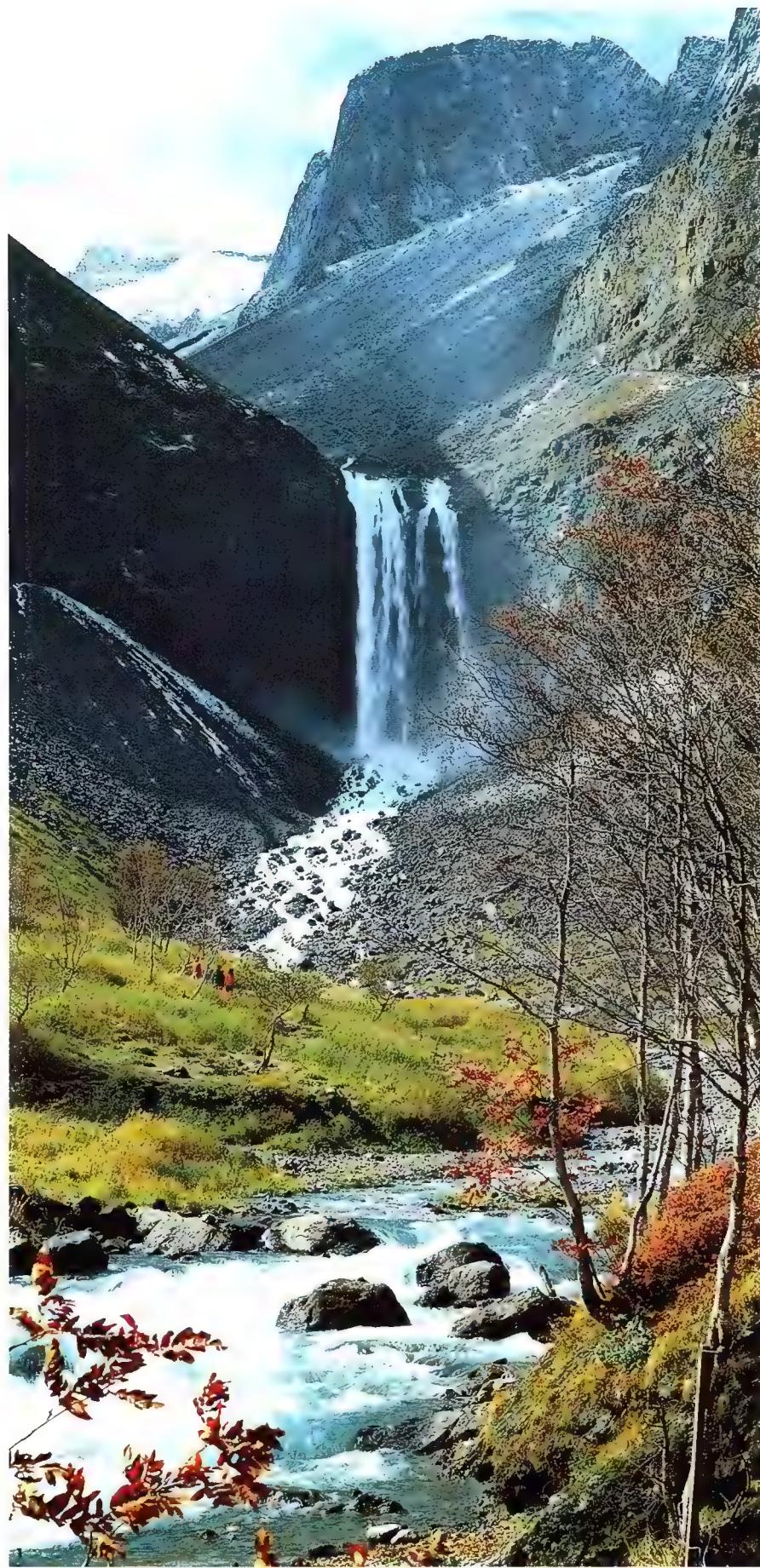
Most people will tell you that Changbai Mountain is unreachable in winter; however, the fact is the north slope of the mountain can be visited year round. The west and south slopes are closed to visitors around October and don't re-open

until 1 May or so. Therefore, tourists are left with the north slope as their winter holiday destination. It only takes just over one hour to get to Heavenly Lake on foot taking the path beside the waterfall of the north slope. You can also walk along the spiralling mountain road or take the special bus, that passes through the gold birch forest, Heifengkou (Black Wind Pass) and the tundra area, and finally to Tianwen Peak, from where you can overlook Heavenly Lake.

### The Black Wind Pass' Gales

The wind on the mountain-top is especially strong and it sweeps snow into the valley. After some time, the snow accumulates to over 10 m deep. Even the birches, which are taller than power poles, are almost completely buried, leaving only the trees' tips exposed.

Are you longing to experience an even stronger wind? Then make your way to Heifengkou (Black Wind Pass), an extremely dangerous pass. One



side of it is a cliff while the other is a deep valley covered with snow. A few years ago, two Koreans made a pilgrimage to the Changbai Mountains. The mountain guards urged them not to pass Heifengkou, but they didn't listen no matter what the guards said. Consequently, when they were passing through Heifengkou, a gale blew them right off the mountain. One died while the other was left hanging on the cliff, and was fortunately saved by the guards later.

Interestingly, the Changbai Mountains is not only Manchurians' ancestral mountain but Korean minorities' sacred mountain as well. Young local Korean



minorities think of Heavenly Lake as the most pristine place for a wedding ceremony. To people from both North Korea and South Korea, a pilgrimage to the Changbai Mountains is like Muslims making a pilgrimage to Mecca. Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea, some Koreans have started to climb the Changbai Mountains from within Chinese territory. Upon seeing the mountains in the North Korean territory from across Heavenly Lake, they immediately kneel down and kowtow to the mountains; some old people even burst into tears. One year, in early March, a group of

South Korean teenagers came to visit the Changbai Mountains. There were 15 of them, aged from 15 to 18. They started to climb in the early morning and that night they didn't return. The hotel staff where the teens were staying began to worry. The next morning, as the kids still hadn't come back, they couldn't wait any longer and decided to go look for them themselves. As they approached the mountain gate, they saw the kids coming down from the mountain, dirty and exhausted.

It turned out that these kids rushed to make a pilgrimage to the mountain but weren't prepared for the hard trip

at all. That day when they got to the mountaintop, it was already dark. They didn't dare come down because the road was too dangerous and the weather was freezing. There was no shelter from the cold but a closed weather station. At the beginning they tried to keep each other warm by huddling together outside the station. However, by the second half of the night, it got even colder and they were starving, so finally they couldn't

1. The most attractive spot on the north slope is the valley at the bottom of the waterfall. (by Lang Qi)

2. In winter, Changbai Mountain top is windy and covered by thick snow, but it's still charming. (by Wei Minxue)

handle it any more. They prised open the door and squeezed in; then they burned all the wood they could find and ate some potatoes they found left in the weather station by the staff members.

### Enjoying Hotsprings under Freezing Temperatures

The north slope in winter still boasts many spectacular attractions, such as the frozen waterfalls. We were walking along the mountain road when suddenly a heavy fog appeared. It was blown towards us by the wind and smelled of

sulphur. We learned that the smell came from the famous Changbai Mountain hotsprings. There are more than ten springs here, from which boiling water gushes out. The water temperature reaches 90 degrees, and the pools are great places to warm yourself. Surrounded by hot air, you'll be sweating in no time. The minerals in the spring water dye the surrounding igneous rock golden, blue, crimson, green, etc. Set off against the white snow, these colours look brilliant.

The scenery surrounding the hotsprings

is very unique — everywhere you look is rime ice (a frost-like coating of ice, as on grass and trees, formed when extremely cold water droplets freeze almost instantly on a cold surface). Almost all the trees and grass close to the springs are covered by rime.

1. The winter ski training centre is built at the entrance to the north slope. (by Wei Minxue)

2. Majestic and unique Yuzhu (Jade Column) Peak near Heavenly Lake. (by Lang Qi)

3. Even though the temperature outside is -20°C, people can still bathe in the hotsprings. (by Lang Qi)

4. The waterfall is also frozen. (by Yu Guozhi)







# The Jing River Gorge on the West Slope



The some 70-km-long Jing River Gorge. (by Wei Minxue)



Compared to the other slopes, the west one is much smoother. Every July and August, flowers bloom on the highland meadow on the west slope providing an extremely beautiful sight. There is a gorge called 'Jing River Gorge', which is even deeper than the Yalu River Gorge. Because the west slope is far from the border, it was developed much earlier than the south slope. In 1989, a rare tornado swept through the primitive forest on the west slope blowing down a lot of trees. In order to transport this wood out of the mountain area, the local forestry bureau built a road specially for carrying wood. This road also has brought groups of visitors. In June 2006, a path with 1,365 stone steps was built for travellers to climb the mountain.

### Like an Old Man Sitting and Meditating

Visitors usually stay in Songjianghe County when they come to the west slope. There are many restaurants,

hotels and hostels. The dishes are mostly Northeast Chinese-style and Korean-style, such as wild mushrooms and vegetables. It's more than 60 km from Songjianghe County to Heavenly Lake. Not far from the county is the Sea of Trees (Lin Hai), abundant with pines and various broadleaf trees. About 20 km away from the Sea of Trees is the mountain gate. The marble gate is very special, shaped like a triangle. Once entering the gate, you are in the tourist area where you will see the greyish main peak of the Changbai Mountains. It looks like a white-haired old man sitting and meditating.

We saw the Double Ladders (Shuangtizi) River on the way. It splits into two and flows down to the foot of the mountain. The west river valley is less than 10 m wide, while the east one is more than 10 m wide and both are over 20 m deep. Shuangtizi River, originating from Heavenly Lake, is at the upper reaches of the Songhua River. It gouged its way through the volcanic dust deposit through

the ages, forming this deep valley.

We continued to climb the mountain, and after over 10 km we arrived at the gold birch forest. Passing through the twisted gold birch trees, we could see the main peak of Changbai Mountain more clearly. It is topped by snow-like volcanic dust. Going around the mountain for another 20 km, we finally came to the parking lot of the highland meadow. From here, visitors have to walk to Heavenly Lake.

### 'Tiger's Back'

Behind the parking lot is the 'Tiger's Back', where the 1,365-step path leading to the mountaintop is. The mountain slope on the right side of the path is quiet as it is within the territory of North Korea. Generally it takes about 30 minutes to walk to the top. For anyone less fit, it probably takes nearly one hour. If you can't climb it or want to save some energy, you can also take the bamboo sedan chair.

On a sunny day, Heavenly Lake is especially bright, reflecting the azure sky and floating clouds. With a telescope, you can clearly see the travellers on Tianwen Peak of the north slope. The Sino-North Korean mere stone stands on the roadside. Some visitors jump over the landmark and step onto North Korean territory. On a cloudy day, Heavenly Lake becomes grey, dark clouds hovering around. If the weather is foggy, you can't even see Heavenly Lake.

After visiting Heavenly Lake, you can return to the parking lot where there are special bus lines to the Jing River Gorge.

### Jing River Gorge Rivals Colorado's Grand Canyon

The Jing River Gorge on the west slope is an attraction developed in recent years. The local people boast that this gorge rivals the Grand Canyon. At some 70 km long and 100-200 m wide, this gorge, the same as the Yalu River Gorge, was formed by river water and rain gouging through the igneous rock. The most spectacular section of the canyon is about 10 km long. The north part of Jing River winds its way northwest along the valley, finally into Songhua River.

Tourists must change to an

environmentally friendly bus at the entrance to the scenic area before they enter. One drawback is that you can't freely choose your own spot to take pictures. If you choose to walk, you'll be able to enjoy various wild flowers, mushrooms, birds' chirping and the natural smells.

Keep yourself from getting lost in the forest by following the clearly laid out signs. The Jing River Gorge cuts through the south end of the forest. Standing on the edge of the gorge and overlooking the bottom, you'll see that Jing River resembles a narrow silver belt. The rain washes the loose volcanic dust off the

cliffs of the gorge, leaving layers of hard, craggy stone walls. Under the sun, they give people a mysterious feeling.

Translated by Nicole Ouyang

1. From 800 m to 1,800 m above sea level is the transitional area between the broadleaf forest to the coniferous forest. The autumn and winter are the most beautiful seasons for the Changbai Mountains. During this time, after the first autumn rain, the high-altitude area has already entered winter. (by Yu Guozhi)

2. The mountain path on 'Tiger's Back', completed in 2006, is more than one km long. Its 1,365 stone steps directly lead to the edge of Heavenly Lake. It takes more energy to climb the west slope than other ones. (by Shi Baoxiu)

3. The greyish volcanic dust that blankets the mountain peak resembles snow. The mountain ridge called 'Tiger's Back' is also covered by volcanic dust, which looks like the pattern on a tiger's neck. (by Shi Baoxiu)





1



## Transport

### Air

There is a direct flight from Hong Kong to Changchun, Jilin Province every Tuesday and Saturday. There are two flights from Guangzhou to Changchun daily. From Shenzhen to Changchun, there are two to three flights daily. Beijing has at least 12 flights to Changchun daily. Other cities, such as Shanghai, Chengdu, Xi'an and Zhengzhou all have direct flights to Changchun.

There is a daily flight between Changchun and Yanji. Every Tuesday and Sunday one more flight is added.

### Train

#### Changchun-Yanji

No. 2167: 7:20 pm~3:07 am

N165: 9 am~5:07 pm

N123: 8:03 pm~4:50 am

#### Yanji-Changchun

No. 2168: 1:22 pm~7:40 am

N166: 10:20 am~5:58 pm

N124: 9:50 pm~5:35 am

Erdao Baihe Station is the closest train station to the Changbai Mountains scenic area. There are trains going to Changchun and Tonghua that pass by or end at this station. K953 departs from Changchun at 1:52 pm and arrives in Baihe at 4:30 am. Train No. 4241 departs from Tonghua at 10:36 am and arrives at Erdao Baihe at 4:55 pm.

### Long-distance Bus

There are two shuttle buses between Changchun and Changbai County every day. You can take this bus to the south slope. The shuttle buses between Yanji and Fusong and between Changchun and Fusong can take you to the west slope.

There are more than ten buses running between Yanji to Erdao Baihe every day that lead to the



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north slope. In Changchun there are also direct long-distance buses to Erdao Baihe.

Changbai County also has direct buses to Songjianghe County, which is closer to the west slope.

Car Rental: you can rent a jeep in Changchun, Yanji, Changbai, Fusong, Erdao Baihe or Songjianghe to climb the mountain or visit the Sea of Trees.

## Tickets

The all-inclusive ticket to the north slope is 100 yuan per person, including all the scenic spots and parking fee. The south and west slopes each cost 60 yuan.

Note that in winter only the north slope can access the Heavenly Lake. The skiing park half way up the west slope has been officially opened to the public. It is said that this park is one of the few natural skiing parks on a high peak in China. Visitors can either enjoy the ice sculptures or go skiing.

## Accommodation

There are hotels and hostels in Erdao Baihe County and at the foot of the Changbai Mountains. The prices vary depending on the quality. High-class hotels average around 220 yuan (there is a 20~80 yuan difference in price between low and high seasons). Hostels are around 10~40 yuan per day. Near the hot springs area at the foot of the mountain, there are many comfortable hotels. Despite the high prices, these hotels attract many guests due to their convenient location — close to Changbai Waterfall and the hot springs.

Songjianghe County is the closest county to the west slope of Changbai Mountains. It only takes about half an hour to get to the west slope gate. Songjianghe County is a decent size and is convenient in terms of restaurants and accommodation. An airport is being built nearby, which will be put into use in late 2008.

Changbai County near to the south slope also has a lot of decent, affordable hotels. The county, over 30 km away from the south slope gate, is also convenient in terms of restaurants.

## Food

The food in the Changbai Mountains area features northeast Chinese-style and Korean-style dishes. The northeast-Chinese-style food comprises mostly stews and cold dishes. The wild-food banquet is unique to the Changbai Mountains. It consists of six dishes made of tens rare wild products such as ginseng, deer antler, bear paw, Chinese woodfrog roe and Matsutake mushrooms. The everyday food of the Korean minority people living around the Changbai Mountains includes rice, soup, pickles, glutinous cake, cold noodles and kimchi. Korean kimchi is very famous, mostly made of balloon flower root, fir, Chinese cabbage, parsnip, cucumber and celery. They taste crispy and a little bit spicy. A famous dish in Yanji is dog-meat hotpot.

## Special Products

The special products of the Changbai Mountains include linden flower honey, mixed flower honey, Korean pine nuts, hazel nuts, walnuts, matsutake mushrooms, hazel mushrooms, black fungus, pine nuts, pre-cooked seaweed and Mingtai dry fish. If you know how to pick ginseng and deer antlers,

they are good choices too. Special souvenirs include Changbai wood paintings, Songhua ink slabs, Anlü stone sculptures, azalea root sculptures, ginseng creams and small Korean-style souvenirs.

## Reminders

The Changbai Mountains in winter are very beautiful, but the temperature can drop to -40°C, so dress warm. Better to take the main road instead of small lanes. It's highly recommended to hire a local guide.

### • Dress Warm

Clothes: feather-padded jacket, hat, scarf and gloves are indispensable items. Warm shoes are very important. Snow boots are the best choice; they are light, warm and cheap. Remember to choose shoes with a deep tread because they can prevent you from slipping. Never buy those with hard plastic bottoms as hard plastic becomes brittle when the temperature is low. The snow on the Changbai Mountains can accumulate to 1.2 m deep, so you'd better prepare a pair of shoe covers or high snow boots in order to prevent snow from getting into your shoes. In addition, a pair of sunglasses is necessary to block the harsh sunlight from hurting your eyes.

### • Camera, Video Camera

1. Bring a camera that can work even at a very low temperature.
2. Digital cameras, especially their batteries, are susceptible to low temperatures. So you'd better bring back-up batteries and keep them warm.
3. Keep the camera close to your body and only take it out when you use it. Put it back into the package right away after you finish using it to avoid being frozen. When you enter a room from outside, do not expose your camera or video camera to the air as the camera lens will condense with water.

### • Changbai Mountains residents' winter customs

In winter, local people start to make sweet glutinous bean paste buns, steamed New Year cakes and tofu and then keep them frozen in jars of different sizes. This way they can eat them at their leisure. As for fresh meat, people usually dip it in water, preserving the meat under a layer of ice. When people want to eat it, they simply knock off the layer of ice.

In winter, sleighs are the most convenient means of transport. Kids have loads of fun with them too. They also make snowmen, roll snow balls, have snow fights, ski and carve ice lanterns.

### • Climate and Weather

The Changbai Mountains belong to the temperate continental climate, which features a long, cold winter, a short, cool and variable summer, a windy spring and a foggy autumn. The temperature throughout the year averages from -7°C to 3°C. The annual precipitation is about 700 to 1,400 mm.

The best time to visit the Changbai Mountains falls in July, August and September. Be aware that it is foggy in autumn. So watch the weather forecast before the trip, otherwise you might not be able to see Heavenly Lake. Winter is the best season for skiing.



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1. The spiral mountain road on the south slope.
2. A traditional village of Korean minorities in Changbai County.
3. A residential area in Hyesan, North Korea.
4. Drying wild mushrooms.
5. Heavenly Lake of the Changbai Mountains.
6. The skiing centre on the north slope is open to tourists. (by Lang Qi)



6

# Rongbaozhai's Woodblock Printing

Photos & Article by Zhu Jianhui



1. A stone statue of a sleeping fairy stands at the entrance of the Rongbaozhai.

2. A craftswoman precisely drafts the outline based on the original.

3. After drafting the outlines, a craftsman starts to carve the woodblock.

4. The colours are filled for printing afterwards.

Woodblock colour printing was an ancient copying technique in China. Its printed work is hardly distinguishable from the original by an outsider to this technique. Rongbaozhai is famous for carrying on the tradition.

## The Amazing Woodblock Colour Printing

In 868, during the Tang Dynasty, Wang Jie

Known throughout China, Liulichang in Beijing is a famous cultural street for hunting out Chinese antiques and curios; among the shops there, Rongbaozhai Studio (Studio of Glorious Treasures) stands out for the quality of its work. It is also the home of a unique technique of woodblock printing, which has been incomparable in the world for more than 300 years.

printed the *Diamond Sutra*, which is the oldest printed book in the world, with an illustration on the inside front cover, a tradition which has remained until today. Hence, books were printed with illustrations very often, and colour illustrations appeared in the 16th century. With continuous improvement in traditional printing techniques and skills, woodblock colour printing can be divided

into four basic steps: drafting outline, carving woodblock, printing, and framing.

The first step — drafting, is drawing all strokes of the same colour on one single woodblock. Therefore, the number of woodblocks for a print depends on the number of colours used in the original. It can be as few as five, or as many as 200, with the largest number at more than 1,600. Based on different blocks, the craftsman will draft the outlines in Chinese ink on a transparent paper, which exactly reflects the density and style of the original. Afterwards, the craftsman may stick the paper on a woodblock, and start carving it. In order to retain the artistic features of their originals, the craftsmen study and digest the spirit of the original work while following the lines to carve. After all the carvings are finished, the craftsman fills in the colours on different blocks and prints in order to make 'new' paintings. The paper or silk, ink and colour dye used should be the same as the original. The last step is framing the colour print in the same way as the original. Since printing materials and framing skills are required to be exactly the same with the original, the woodblock colour printing is known as 'art representation'.

### Perfection of Framing Skills

Another amazing technique of Rongbaozhai is the framing of Chinese calligraphy painting. Not only new calligraphy paintings are perfectly framed, but also damaged and moldy old paintings are restored.

Chinese paintings were usually made on stiff silk in ancient times. Due to the long passage of time or inappropriate storage methods, the surface of the painting and mounted part could easily be damaged or spoiled by mold.

In this case, the craftsman in Rongbaozhai will first slowly remove the painting from the old frame, layer by layer, until the very last layer of paper attached to the silk cloth is removed. Next, the craftsman will clean the surface of the painting with a specially-made liquid, specially treat the mold areas, and rinse it with clean water at the end. After the artwork is wind-dried, the craftsman will refill the colours and repair the damaged parts. The whole process requires craftsmen with an immense understanding of the original work so as to maintain the spirit of the artwork. Besides, in order to keep the work 'looking as old as the old work looks', an expert will embellish the framing paper to make the vintage look. As a result, the decayed calligraphy painting will be refreshed and granted a new life.

Translated by Y. Rouge



### Travel Tips

#### Rongbaozhai 荣宝斋

Address: 19 Liulichang West Street, Xuanwu District, Beijing

Tel: (10) 6303 6090 / 6303 3352

Transportation: Take the bus No. 7, 14, 15, or 25, and get off at Liulichang Station; or take the subway to Hepingmen Station and walk southwards for about 300 metres.

Opening hours: 09:00 ~ 17:30

5. A craftsman is cleaning and removing the mold on an old Chinese calligraphy painting.

6. Sticking transparent paper on the back of the repaired painting.

7. Preparing to frame the copy and hang it on the wall.

# Ruo'ergai in Sichuan

The hottest attraction in Sichuan must be fairylan Jiuzhaigou; however, you shouldn't miss the other sites nearby: the widest grassland Ruo'ergai, the most significant lama temple in northwest Sichuan, Dazha Temple, the Tibetan village of Gawa, the Shenxian Chi (also known as Goddess Lake or Fairy Pool)... they are all full of wonder as is Jiuzhaigou!

Article by Mickey Ching



## Relaxing on the Beautiful Grassland

Lying on the lush grassland with eyes closed and arms outstretched is the best thing to do in summer, to relax the mind and to escape from the business of city life. Instead of travelling all the way to Inner Mongolia in northwest China, you can find the vast prairie of Ruo'ergai in Sichuan equally appealing. It lies in the northwest of the province where Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces meet. As one of the top five grasslands in China, it consists of four counties: Ruo'ergai, Aba, Hongyuan and Rangtang.

35 km away from Ruo'ergai County, the prairie covers about 40,000 square km, the second largest wetland in the country. Scattered with

more than 300 groups of lakes of various sizes, it is regarded as the most splendid marsh and grassland.

Of the three star-like plateau lakes on the wetland, Flower Lake is the largest, around which hundreds of hectares of grasslands are regarded as the 'Biodiversity Conservation and Nature Reserve of Plateau Wetland'. Whilst enjoying the sunset at the lake, you can also see many of the A-class protected animals of the nation such as Black-Necked cranes and many other rare species.

## Until All is Over, Ambition Never Dies

In the Yellow River's long journey from its source to the sea, it rounds nine great curves. The site of the first curve is found in Tangke Village, Ruo'ergai County, where the Yellow River meets the White River. Gansu Province is on the other side of the bank. The best time to visit the first curve is at sunset. Dazha Temple on the prairie is also well known with its unique architectural style which integrates both Tibetan and Han tradition.

## The Tibetan Village — Gawa Village

After sightseeing and a temple visit, it's time to walk into the local Tibetan village, Gawa Village, 40 km away from the county in Qiuji town. The local houses with their unique Gawa architecture feature the artistic characteristics of Tibetan colour painting and sculpting. Built with wood from the mountains, they meld naturally into the beauty of nature, forming a picture found nowhere else. It's





easy to feel the mysterious spirit of the people from these ancient houses and puffing earthen stoves. If you wish to flee from city life, this would be a good choice; this pure Gawa Village where streamers flutter in the wind and you can relax by the town river or visit the local mills.

### Shenxian Chi Where Nymphs Bathe

Every sight in Jiuzhaigou is a special picture. You don't need much skill to shoot a perfect photo in this fairyland, but of course you need to prepare enough film or memory cards. Nevertheless, there is another place where plateau lakes and forests are as fascinating as Jiuzhaigou, that is the Goddess Pond (Shenxian Chi Scenic spot).

Located in northwest Sichuan Plateau at the south part of Ming Mountain, Shenxian Chi means place where fairies bathe. Its uniqueness lies in its combination of the features of Huanglong and Jiuzhaigou. It is composed of over 1,200 alpine lakes. These are the best primitive forests in Sichuan, large areas of arrow bamboo (Fargesia spathacea), as well as various kinds of national protected animals such as giant pandas, antelopes and golden-haired monkeys. Its main scenic sites are scattered in a highland valley 3,000 meters long and 300 meters wide. Even Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong lose colour when compared with the unexploited primitive forest of Ruo'ergai.

Translated by Huang He



### Tips for Travel in Ruo'ergai

**Climate:** With an altitude of 3,500 meters to 4,000 meters, the climate in Ruo'ergai is a typical humid plateau, which is cold in winter and cool in summer. There is considerable difference between day and night temperatures. The average temperature in a year is 7°C with the highest average temperature in July from 10°C to 12.7°C.

**Transportation:** Fly to Chengdu and then take the shuttle bus from Chadianzi station to Ruo'ergai County.

1. Plateau lake-Flower Lake. (Courtesy of Miramar Travel)

2. The grassland at sunset. (by Peng Zheng)

3. Five-flower Lake of Jiuzhaigou. (by Huang Yanhong)

4. The most important Tibetan temple in northwest Sichuan-Dazha Temple. (Courtesy of Miramar Travel)

5. The first curve of the Yellow River. (Courtesy of Miramar Travel)

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9 ~ 10 May



### Dragon Boat Races

Dragon boat races are one of China's oldest traditions, dating back over 2,500 years, and in the last decades the popularity has spread around the world, with the sport well established in places as far flung as Singapore, Canada, and Australia. Although you can paddle a dragon boat any time of the year, the true focus of the sport is the Dragon Boat festival in Binhu, Wuxi City, complete with its own special foods and legendary origins.

Jiangsu

May

Beijing

### The 20th Beijing Daxing Watermelon Festival

'The 20th Beijing Daxing Watermelon Festival' is held in daxing District, Beijing every year, which is a popular event to both Chinese and foreign tourists. During the festival, tourists may visit the watermelon museums, enjoy picking sweet and juicy watermelons, and participate in the eating watermelon competition.



14 ~ 18 May

Hong Kong

### International Art Fair

There will be hundreds of art works from internationally known as well as up-and-coming artists from 100 of the world's leading contemporary and modern art galleries. This art fair the in Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre is an excellent opportunity to showcase the latest art from Asia to a wider global audience. In addition, the fair will offer an extensive programme of educational talks, special events and special exhibitions.



1 May ~ 31 Oct

Fujian

### China-Haitan International Sand Sculpture Festival

The biennial Sand Sculpture Festival in Longfengtou Sand Beach, Pingtan County, carries forward sand sculpture culture and demonstrates the charm of ocean through a brand-new artistic expression. During the Sand Sculpture Festival, exquisite and beautiful sand sculptures of the Great Wall, Qin Terra-cotta Army, Pyramids, Sphinx, Hanging Gardens of Babylon, etc., were shown. The sculptures collectively put on show among others the most typical tourism culture and natural scenic beauty of Fujian, including Tanshishan Culture, Sanfangqixiang (3 streets & 7 alleys) Culture, Ship-building and Navigation Culture and Shoushan Stone Culture, the four greatest tourism culture brands of Fuzhou City.



May

Shandong

### Pingyin Rose Arts Festival

The roses in Pingyin are well-known for its rich colours, big blossoms, thick petals, and strong fragrance. Rose Arts Festival is held every May in Rose Town, Pingyin County, Jinan, more than 30,000 mu rose garden of beautiful flowers. Visitors may pick flowers with the gardeners and learn how to make rose petal jams from them.

1 ~ 10 May

Hebei

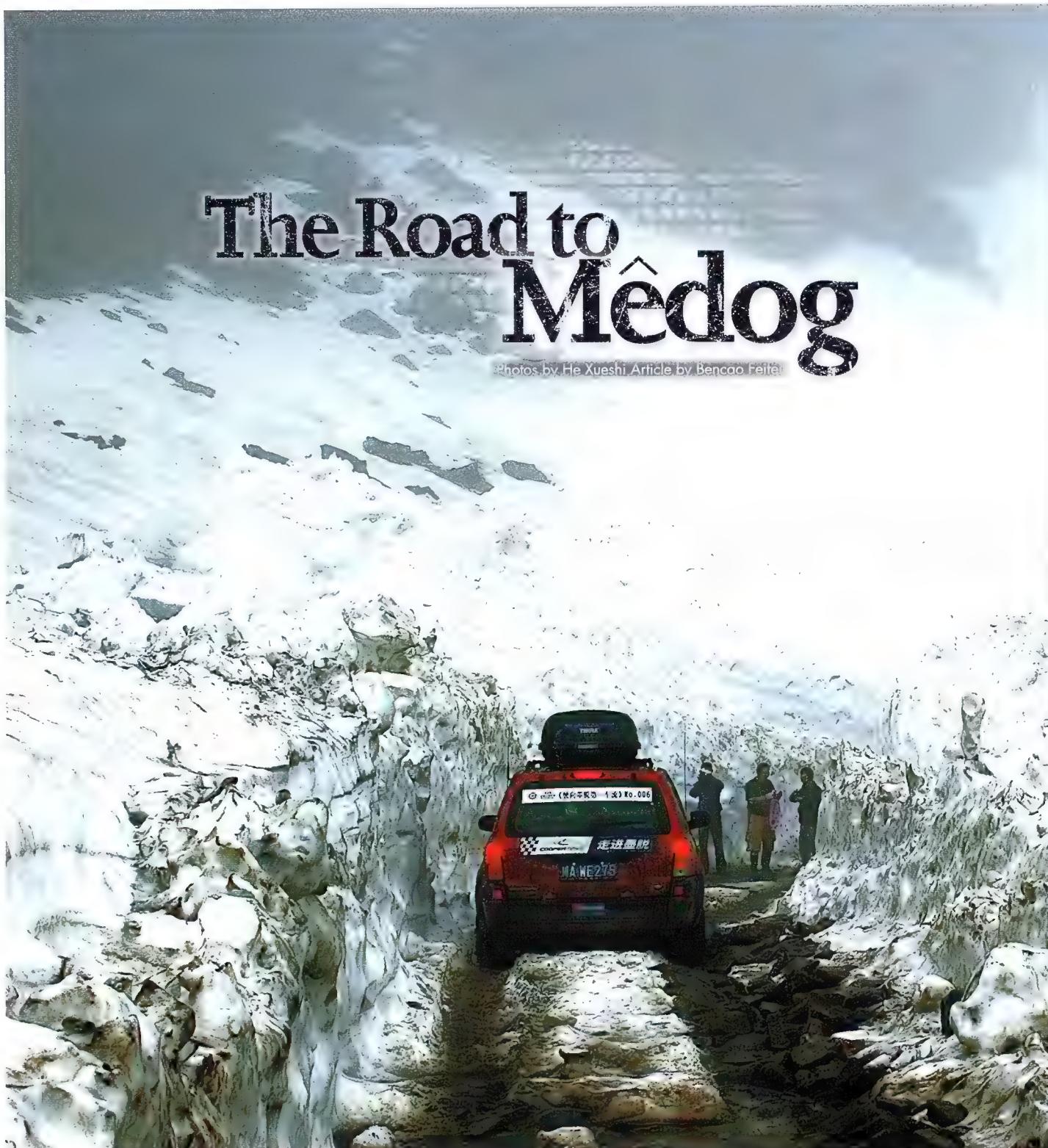
### China Wuqiao Acrobatic Festival

Wuqiao Acrobatic World is located in the southwest of Cangzhou City. With the incorporation of folk customs, performances, recreations and exchanges, the charm of acrobatics can be viewed. Wuqiao acrobatics has been a local custom since 221B.C. — 206B.C. It is spectacular to see traditional acrobatic skill show, trick cycling, jar twirling, fireworks party in the 'China Wuqiao Acrobatic Festival'.



# The Road to Mêdog

photos by He Xueshi Article by Bencao Feite



Mêdog, Tibet is the only county inaccessible by highway in China. Dazzlingly white snow-covered mountains soar into the sky and a large and rapid river embedded in the deep valley are natural barriers to humans entering the area. As there is no well-constructed highway, Mêdog is only accessible in March every year and walking is the only means. A group of 4WD lovers finally succeeded in arriving at the county in their motor vehicles.



1. Glaciers on the Galongla Mountain section of the Medog Highway.

2. There is not an inch of smooth surface on this section of the road to Medog.

The first attempt was led by Zhaxi, the head of Chengdu 428 Outdoor Sports Club, whose comrades are seven cars owners of the Chengdu 99 Rally Club. The participating 4WD rally car drivers were all veterans who had experience in places from plateaus to deserts. But as a precaution, all the participants paid for insurance policies against possible fatal accidents and

everyone signed a mutual liability disclaimer between each of us. All of us had mentally prepared for the worst scenario that we might have to abandon our vehicles and continue to Medog on foot.

### The Inaccessible City

Travelling from Bomi to Medog, you can experience four seasons on the mountain in ten days. Galongla Mountain is 3,700 m above sea level and the altitude difference between the snowy mountain and Medog County is 3,000 m. Weather changes from the glacial landscape to the tropical rainforest climate are tremendous. The highway connecting Zhamu and Medog is called Zhamo Highway. Medog is situated on the junction between the Indian Ocean plate and the Eurasian plate, which is an area of frequent earthquakes. Debris flows, landslides and ice-snow are very common and they can cause serious damage to the highway. Separated from Medog by a river, Palongzangbu River is notoriously nicknamed the 'Museum of Highway Hazards'. In 1962, the government invested 8 million yuan on highway construction and completed a section of 8 km with eight construction workers died in the process. As a result, the project was not completed. In 1975, with another investment of 24 million yuan, the construction work was suspended after the completion of 80 km due to insufficient capital and natural disasters. In 1988, another 2 million yuan



was spent on repairs to the Zhamu section of the road. In 1990, at a cost of over 14 million yuan and duration of three years, the section connecting Mêdog was finally completed.

The total length of Zhamu Highway is 147 km. The highest point is Galongla Mountain passage at an altitude of 3,700 m and the lowest point is Mêdog at 800 m above sea level. Five stations were set up along the Mêdog Highway 24k-52k-80k-108k-113-147k (Mêdog) to facilitate refilling supplies for people entering Mêdog. Walkers have to walk through ice slopes, snow walls, ice lakes, debris roads, flooded roads and tropical wood paths as well as tens of bridges and consecutive U-shaped turns. In addition, they have to pass 7-8 m wide waterfalls, stony areas, mudslides and leech habitats. To adventurous nature lovers, it is a perfect natural environment for such activities.

### The First Barrier on the Way

After the car fleet set off, it was running smoothly; the first 24 km from Bomi is a comparatively smooth road of sand and stones. However, dangers lay ahead after 24k, as the cars entered snow-covered stretches at an altitude above 3,000 m, and the temperature dropped drastically. The cars were moving through the ice cracks in the middle of the road. The lead car suddenly broke down when entering a snow slope. Because of the slippery road surface, the car failed to make it up the slope despite several attempts. Those crewmembers got out and made path by moving rocks to the wheel tracks. The lead car moved up cautiously, as there was a deep abyss on the left and a huge emerging ice block was above on the right. If the car crashed into the ice block, it would be buried by the ice. After two unsuccessful attempts, the car was placed across the road. The engine started again. When the car had covered two thirds of the distance, a rock under the wheels limited the speed and the momentum reduced. At the moment the car almost came to a halt, the crewmembers rallied in time to push the vehicle and successfully avoided the ice block at slope top. The car finally was able to stop at the hilltop. With our collaborative efforts, the crew overcame the first obstacle.

After entering a 7-8 m long waterfall, nothing could be seen through the windows. Even though the wipers were set to the maximum speed, they could not compete with the plunging water. With zero visibility, the driver slowly steered left and right to move forward little by little and the car was creeping close to the abyss on the left. The noise of water dropping on the car overwhelmed all the voices. Though the crewmembers shouted loudly



with their walkie-talkie to warn the driver, he could not hear at all. Seeing the car would fall into the abyss at any minute, Zhaxi rushed into the car and drove it out of the dangerous zone. Continuing with the journey, sharp rock fragments were everywhere on the road; it was like a mountain of knives. Suddenly, some popping sounds were heard from the windows, and they were getting louder and louder as the car moved forward. The tyres must be punctured and air must be leaking, but at the altitude of above 3,000 m, there was nothing we could do except keep going. However, another 'pop' sound came and it sounded like the air of the tyre was totally gone after hitting the sharp-edged rock fragments. There was nothing but to stop and

1. The power of the plunging waterfall could break the windscreen wipers.

2. An avalanche on the highway in the Mêdog glacier area. Car pushing is common.

3. A stunning ice lake on the path to Mêdog.

change the tyres. The car had gone ahead for only a short distance after the tyres were changed, when it fell into a drainage trench. The whole troop stopped and helped. Again the car was rescued by teamwork.

### Turning Back

After the 80k session, the road was muddy and slippery but at least it would not cause any damage to the car. Driving on the muddy road was actually quite fun, as it was not common in urban areas. Unfortunately, when reaching the 113k, the troop encountered the aftermath of a landslide caused by the non-stop drizzle in the past few days. We all geared up and got ready to repair the road but then found the landslide debris area was too large and that the length of the debris covered area was tens of metres. Some pieces of debris were a quarter the size of the car, so we certainly couldn't drive through it, not even with years of rally experience. It was totally chaotic. For safety reasons, we made the decision to turn back. Although it was disappointing, we all understood that we should not risk our lives.

After we arrived in Lhasa and on the way back to Chengdu, two guys in the expedition wished to try their luck again for a ride to Mêdog. Again, they arrived in Bomi, and bumped into a local veteran driver of rally vehicles in a vehicle repair factory, who had just returned from Mêdog. Knowing the road was accessible, they made their second attempt. The session before 113k was the route they had taken a few days ago so they drove smoothly without a problem. Then they came to a series of consecutive gates, and opened them one by one... It was a bit annoying. After opening the eighth gate and travelling a few kilometres further, they saw Mêdog from a distance. At that moment, they realised the gates were signals telling them that their destination was not too far away.

### Setting off Again for Mêdog

Having known that some guys had reached Mêdog successfully, those who could not make it the first jaunt due to the landslide, decided to try again in late August. Setting off from Bomi, the little ray of sunlight gave hope to the whole group. If it did not rain, entering Mêdog would



be possible. After passing 24k, we were climbing a slope and a vehicle from the opposite direction was moving toward us. The lead car stopped and asked everyone to reverse through the radio. Recklessness surely did no good under that road condition. Refusal to yield would result in a longer delay. When the car troop was climbing up Galongla Mountain slowly, the slope was full of rock fragments and the road was getting narrow. Nevertheless, it led to more beautiful scenery.

Driving to Mêdog is like driving in hell. You are facing not only all kinds of natural hazards, but also the attack of wild animals and insects. We all expected it would be dangerous landscapes and blood-sucking leeches would appear any time along the session from 80k to Mêdog. I woke up the next morning and got out from my sleeping bag with a cockroach. I started getting used to those kinds of situations. In order to protect myself from being bitten by leeches, I put on a pair of knee-length socks and a sports jacket, and buttoned up every part of my clothing. At the muster point, I

heard that a fellow had suffered a leech bite and he showed us his bleeding leg. We joked that it might be his karma for doing bad things.

Passing 113k, the wild Yarlung Zangbo River appeared in front of us. The river partitioned the Qing-tibetan Plateau, creating a canyon. The warm and humid currents from the Indian Ocean supplied abundant water vapour and turned the area into a green wonderland. The encounter between currents from the north and the south took place here, bringing snowy weather to a large area. The peak was always capped with snow while the lower mountain slope was covered by the green woods. Plunging waterfalls, flowing springs, fauna and animals together formed a rare picturesque landscape for all seasons.

We saw a child of the Ba ethnic group outside a small wooden hut. His mature and solemn gestures and the terror in his eyes should not be found in children of his age. His facial expressions captured our attention and we took our cameras and approached him through the area of leeches.





1. Driving to Mêdog requires climbing over the Galongla Mountain on the way.

2. Rally cars moving through the Mêdog rainforest which looked like an African rainforest.

3. The green world brought about by the warm and humid weather from the Indian Ocean. It looks like an Amazonian jungle.

He looked timid. We showed our goodwill with smiles and offered him candies. After half an hour, he finally replied with smile. When we waved goodbye, we saw a sense of anticipation and hope in his eyes...

### Finally Arriving in County

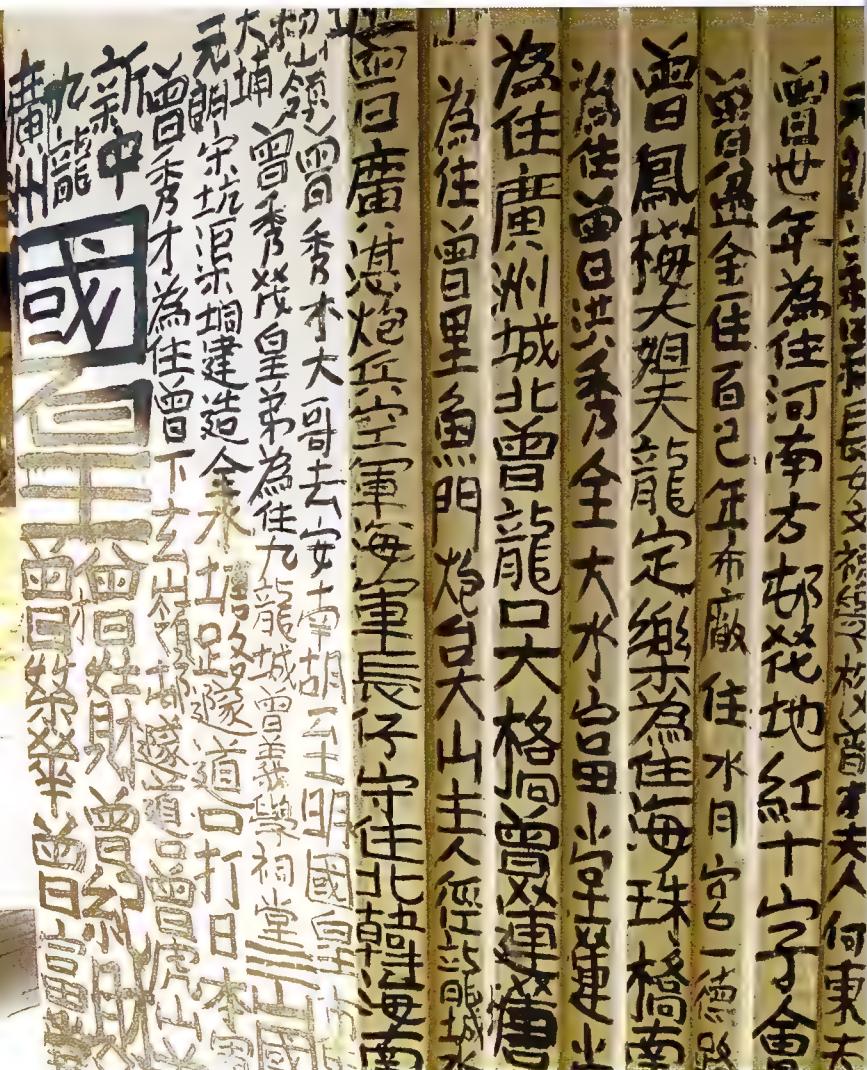
In the afternoon, after passing through the eighth gate, my cell phone detected network signals. We were glad that we were close to the county. In less than 20 minutes, we were able to see the county from afar. All of us stopped and waited for the rest of our fellows, then drove into

Mêdog in a group.

A huge 'China Mobile' banner was proof that Mêdog was no longer as backward as it used to be. At least it was accessible by telecommunication. The county was indeed not as shabby and poor as we had imagined. However, the prices of commodities were relatively high due to the difficult transportation, which was understandable and acceptable. The most precious thing was the simple lifestyle; the kindness and hospitality of the residents of Mêdog remained unchanged. Their warm reception to us, a group of outsiders, was unforgettable. Visiting Mêdog before the completion of its highway was a worthy adventure.

Translated by Ezekiel Pang





# Kowloon City

## City of the Crouching Dragon

Some people laughed him off as a fool and vandal; others looked up to him as an artist for his highly individualistic calligraphy; some considered his work an important part of their collective memory as they grew up with his graffiti. His name was Tsang Tsou Choi (Chinese: 曾灶財) (1921 – 2007). He gave himself the title 'King of Kowloon', as he claimed he owned Kowloon City and the surrounding land. Well, is this really the case? What's the story of Kowloon City in Hong Kong?

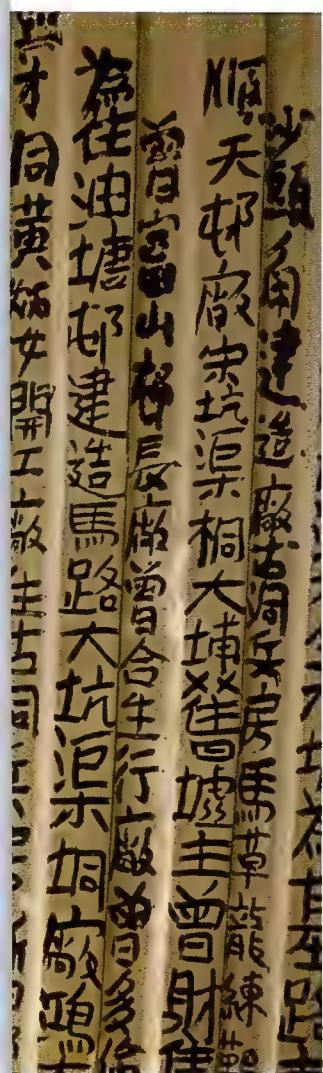
Article by Kay Cheng

Many Hongkongers had come across in the streets the Chinese brush calligraphy of Tsang Tsou Choi, a famous Hong Kong graffiti artist. His works were exhibited at the 2003 Venice Biennale;

he was the only Hongkonger who obtained that honour. Therefore, he became famous and some of his works were auctioned at HK\$55,000.

Tsang Tsou Choi had done calligraphy graffiti





for over 50 years, leaving his artworks in different districts of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. The content of his calligraphy was peculiarly impressive. Regarding whether his brush calligraphy — barely comprehensible in content and peculiar in form — is art or not, comments vary. However, the legend of the King of Kowloon is unique.

### How Did He Become King?

Originally named Tsang Choi, Tsang Tsou Choi was born in Liantang Village, Zhaoqing, Guangdong Province. He migrated to and settled down in Hong Kong at 16. His leg was injured during the time he worked as a builder and a worker at a rubbish collection station. Since then, he had to rely on a pair of crutches to get around. How could a disabled grass-roots worker become a 'king'?

When Tsang Tsou Choi sorted the things left behind by his ancestors, he found out that part of the land in Kowloon had been granted to his family by the then government before it was ceded to Britain. After Hong Kong became a colony of Britain, the Tsang's were no longer big landlords in Kowloon. Tsang was unhappy about that and tried to bring a lawsuit against Queen Elizabeth. As a result, he wrote calligraphy in the streets to manifest his 'sovereignty'. On 15 July 2007, he died of heart disease at the age of 86. At the end of his legendary life, he had never become king in reality.

### Sovereignty of Kowloon

Kowloon, or Kowloon Peninsula, was divided

into Kowloon (south to Boundary Street) and New Kowloon (north to Boundary Street) due to the lease contract between Britain and China. In 1984, the Sino-British Joint Declaration clarified the future of Hong Kong, and Kowloon and New Kowloon started to merge. The division at Boundary Street was meaningless and the two areas became known as Kowloon.

Strangely, like the property laws covering the New Territories, owners of some properties in New Kowloon still need to pay land tax to the HKSAR government. The reason is complicated. New Kowloon was originally part of the New Territories and was leased to Britain for a period of 99 years from 1898. In 1937, due to the lack of land for development, the government earmarked the flat land north to Boundary Street and south to Lion Rock as 'New Kowloon' for development purposes. New Kowloon included Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, part of Kowloon City and Sham Shui Po (Stonecutters Island excluded). As the area was leased land of the British government, the

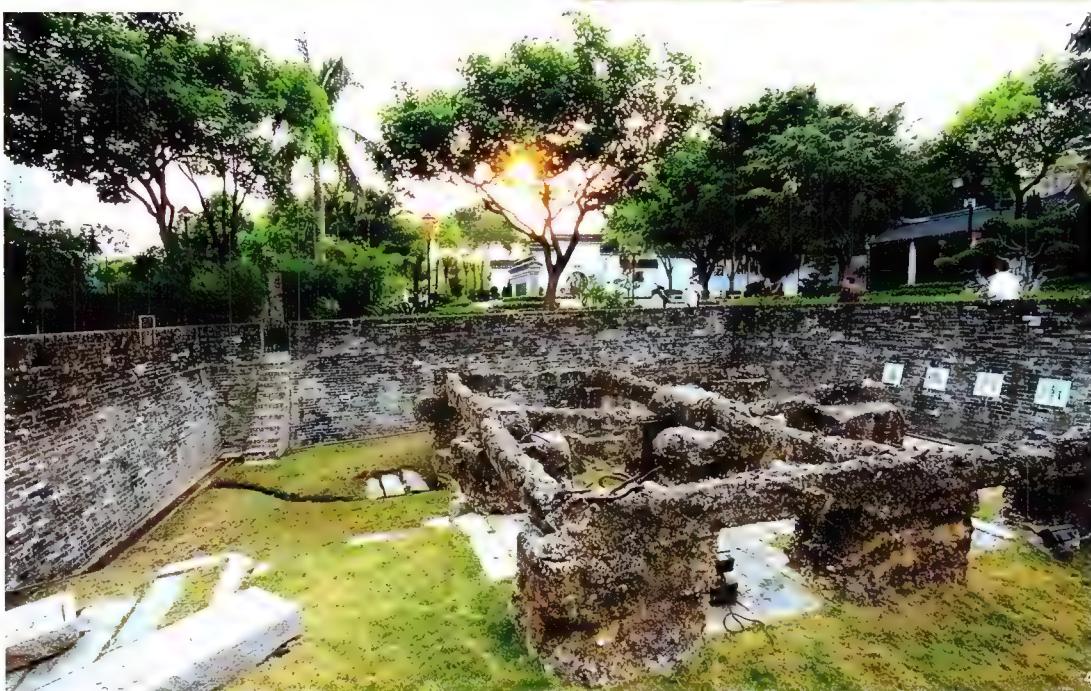


1. The 'King of Kowloon' Tsang Tsou Choi, with crutches, wrote graffiti in many places around Hong Kong.

2. The street art of the 'King of Kowloon'. (by Shi Baoxiu)

3. The rock pieces exhibited at Sung Wong Toi Garden are only one third of the original. (by Chan Sau Chuen)

4. Kowloon Walled City Park exhibits the historical relics unearthed when Kowloon Walled City was removed. (by Lee Wing Kit)





property owners of New Kowloon had to pay to the British government land tax higher than that of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. Decades afterwards, the New Territories still legally includes New Kowloon and the land tax was shifted to the Lands Department of the HKSAR.

### *Kowloon City, a Epitome of Hong Kong History*

Kowloon City includes Kowloon Walled City, Carpenter Road and Nga Tsin Wai Road. When other divisions of Kowloon developed quickly into commercial districts, Kowloon City stood still, witness to the history of Hong Kong. The Qing government saved Kowloon Walled City as a garrison encampment and supply station when it leased the land from Hong Kong to Britain. In the next year, Britain dispatched troops to occupy Kowloon Walled City and drove the Qing officials away. Afterwards, Kowloon Walled City deteriorated due to lack of maintenance. Even worse, it was anarchic and became a niche for gangsters of all sorts and it was even a hideaway for criminals, until the Sino-British Joint Declaration stated that the Kowloon Walled City be removed and the Kowloon Walled City Park was built on the site instead.

### *Tamed Ninth Dragon under Lion Rock*

Lion Rock divides New Kowloon and the New Territories. Lion Rock Tunnel penetrates the hill to link up the two regions. It is one of Hong Kong's landmarks and a spiritual symbol for Hongkongers.

The name 'Kowloon', literally meaning 'Nine

Dragons', can be traced back to a legend related to Lion Rock. The legend said that nine dragons brought disasters to Kowloon and the heavenly gods sent a lion to suppress them. Pat Sin Leng (literally, 'Eight Immortals Hill') was the tamed eight dragons. The last dragon was pressed under the lion, which is Lion Rock, and under Lion Rock is Kowloon Hill.

Now Kowloon Hill is gone. Was the dragon really destroyed by the lion? In fact, the real cause for the removal of Kowloon Hill was Kai Tak Airport. Kowloon Hill was levelled to build Kai Tak Airport in 1941 when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong. The 'corpse' of the ninth dragon was thrown into Victoria Harbour for reclamation purpose. Besides, Kai Tak Airport 'killed' not only Kowloon Hill, but also Sung Wong Toi Platform.

### *Sacred Hill and Sacred Rock*

The original site of the Kai Tak Airport Passenger Building was a peak named Sacred Hill. In 1276, Zhao Shi and Zhao Bing, two kings of the dying Song Dynasty, were chased southward by the Mongols. They stayed briefly on a huge rock on Sacred Hill on Kowloon Peninsula. Kowloon residents inscribed the huge rock with the words 'Sung Wong Toi'.

During WWII, on 8 December 1941, the Japanese attacked Hong Kong, bombarding Kai Tak Airport. The next year, the Japanese expanded the airport by blowing up Sung Wong Toi Platform. The airport expansion project continued after the war, and the remaining part of Sacred Hill was levelled. Kowloon residents formed a Sung Wong Toi Platform protection movement, prompting the

1. The historical relics of Kowloon Walled City, for example, stone inscribed board, big gun, pillar pedestal, and official steles of the Qing government, are all kept in the exhibition hall designed to resemble a yamen, an ancient government office. (by Shi Boxiu)

2. Signal Hill under Lion Rock. (by Kay Cheng)

3. Lung Kong Road divided Kowloon Walled City Park and Kai Tak Airport before it was moved to Chek Lap Kok. (by Lau Yeung)

government to retrieve the rock, now in pieces and relocate it to the Sung Wong Toi Garden for exhibition. The rock is an important milestone in the history of conservation in Hong Kong.

### Signal Hill Seen from Kai Tak

Kowloon City is not a highly developed commercial area. The buildings have been kept low because of the aircraft restrictions. However, the airport brought about an influx of people and busy traffic to the area. The densely packed tenement buildings and eateries are characteristic of it.

Landing at Kai Tak Airport was notoriously difficult — perhaps the most difficult in the world. The plane needed to make a bend, and fly low over the nearby buildings before it could land on the runway. The arriving passengers on the low-flying plane could even see the residents having

dinner inside their buildings.

Signal Hill, the hillock located at Kowloon Tsai was where a plane had to pass before it landed on runway 13. The hillock was painted red and white, and equipped with a navigation light and radio navigation device. The plane was guided to the hillock before the pilot made a bend and landed the plane visually. Due to the paintwork on the hillock, it was also named 'Checker Hill'; it also became a favourite place for photographers to view and shoot airplanes.

Due to the tremendous passenger and cargo transport volumes at Kai Tak Airport, the Hong Kong International Airport was moved to Chek Lap Kok in 1998. There are no longer low-flying planes over residential buildings and the continual rumbling of planes in Kowloon City, but lonely Signal Hill is left gazing out over windy Victoria Harbour.

Translated by Zhang Boli

### NEW TERRITORIES



# Green Team, Who's in?

Article By Richard Quest  
Photo Courtesy of CNN

When is an idea a bad idea? When it is designed to have maximum impact but ends up having minimum effect. This is what is happening with the airlines' 'help the environment' plans, particularly in terms of carbon offsetting.

I am not a nasty person. I do not want to hurt small animals. I think it is fair that the polluter pays. But I am pretty put off by the proposals that the airlines have come up with.

We are being asked to make an extra payment — usually via the airline's website — to an environmental group to plant trees or take some other measure such as emissions trading, to reduce the harmful CO<sub>2</sub> effects of the flight. But it is the passengers that are being asked to pay, not the airlines! It is the 'ain't our fault' from the airlines that has me foaming.

Qantas has just launched its scheme. On its website, CEO Geoff Dixon says the 'carbon-offset payment will go towards Australian based Greenhouse Friendly approved abatement programs' and that 'offsetting projects can include tree planting, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy projects.'

Lufthansa is no better. Its website tells me I should pay US\$53 to offset a flight from Frankfurt to Los Angeles in economy and US\$78 for business class — but because it is voluntary the responsibility for your carbon footprint is left up to you.

Do not misunderstand me: I believe we should all do everything we can to

help reduce the damage to the planet from our travels. All of us. You, me, the airlines — everyone. However, I object to the way the airlines are shoving the responsibility all over to you and me.

## Be Bold, Travel Industry

If airlines were really so concerned about the environment, their websites would flash up, 'Is this trip really necessary?' Then, just before you book an expensive business class flat bed, the website could ask, 'Err... the seat you are about to buy is the most environmentally unfriendly on the plane. You will be dumping 3.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere — would you like to down-grade?' Finally, if I did go ahead and buy, the airline could automatically include the offsetting fee in the ticket price thus relieving me of the choice.

Let us look at the facts. First, it could well take the entire lifetime of those trees you plant to offset the one flight you make — not just the few hours it took you to cross the planet. Second, there really is no guarantee that those trees ever get planted or that the complicated offset scheme actually reduces the emissions.

Even senior executives in the industry admit the schemes are neither transparent nor effective.

Richard Quest is a CNN anchor and correspondent based in London. He also hosts half-hour program 'CNN Business Traveller' every month. For more program details and schedule go to [www.cnn.com/businesstraveller](http://www.cnn.com/businesstraveller)



And as for the hotel industry, do not smirk in the corner! You are no better. In your rooms, the default position is the least environmentally friendly. You require us to put the card on the bed if we want to re-use sheets. We have to hang up towels to use them again.

If the hotel industry was serious about the environment it would say, 'We won't change your sheets until day three, unless you tell us otherwise.'

Privately, airline and hotel executives tell me they would be prepared to be bolder, but they are afraid of the competition taking advantage of a perceived service disadvantage. One luxury hotel chain said its guests 'expect' clean, crisp sheets every day at home.

Well, guess what? This is the time to be bold. A time for us all to say we are serious about the environment — and taking fewer trips is a good place to start. I have nothing against the airlines that 'doing their bit', but let us have less of the carbon offsetting and tree planting schemes. By all means plant a tree... but you might want to stay at home to water it.





1. Street stall selling lucky coloured wrappers and decorations down in the older district.

2. Taoist Temple of Ziyun



# Walk-about in Jiangmen

Photos by Mila Rodica Article by Tony Henderson

Touristy meandering was not the attraction for that most recent China visit, to Jiangmen in the Pearl River Delta, on the southern side. Rather, it was just to get acquainted with lesser known places while learning about the changes taking place in this economically heaving nation, where the new is developing amid what's long been.

In the morning saw us launch by local bus toward a Taoist temple, Ziyun Temple on Mt. Guifeng, in Xicheng Town, Xinhui District, and from there taxiing to the temple door. The long stone steps led to a cluster of smartly done up halls that I knew were quite ancient though that old veneer had been lost during the renovations in the 2001. This Taoist temple proved to be more a monument to Taoism rather than a living legend, but that's why one travels to find out. To 'glass-case' Taoism in a particular place contradicts its anarchistic philosophy, which is best declared in a wooded glen, or by a running stream with mossed boulders and there is no need to have a building of any sort. However, there is a tradition linked to Taoism where rites are carried out, and that tradition has to be passed down thus an organisation was founded. The equidistant trees, the too regular lines, the spick-and-span alters unadulterated by messy incense dust and uncluttered by the usual fruits, teas and oils, all bringing evidence of the more

spiritual human being — all missing.

Just for an adventure my wife Mila and I decided to walk to the Buddhist temple of Yu Tai directly, which I had learned was on the sunny side of the same Guifeng Range where Ziyun was sited. It took almost two hours and the only sign of human life were the hard liquor restaurants — served with cat, dog or other culinary oddities that are not usually taken by foreign visitor to China. Those were here and there along the wayside.

In the evening it was the turn of the very pleasing restaurants on Food Street, actually at Food Street as it is an adjunct to the Yucca Hotel, fourth floor. Great Wall red wine and a selection from among the many cuisines made available there with pleasantries amid the other patrons, lots of families, who seemed to delight in our presence. Our musical interlude came later with a beer or two enjoying the Filipino band, the Primaveras Strollers, letting loose on the ground



floor Boston Cafe. They played all kinds of requests from the floor and patronage was 99% Chinese.

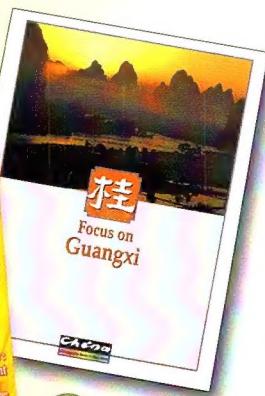
It was a fine holiday and we had meandered along the alleys and highways quite according to whim, just digging the crowd, taking delight in sights of an old China grown young. Also, the new-made-old replicas that were found along the promenades of the river. A guy was selling the biggest honeycomb ever seen, over a foot wide. All kinds of figurines, jade artifacts and sundry household items were on display. We ended our last day's jaunt taking it easy walking the tree-lined avenues by the hotel before our return bus trip to Shenzhen. Speeding over the Zhuhai Bridge, contemplating another adventure, elsewhere in the Pearl River Delta.





# China TOURISM

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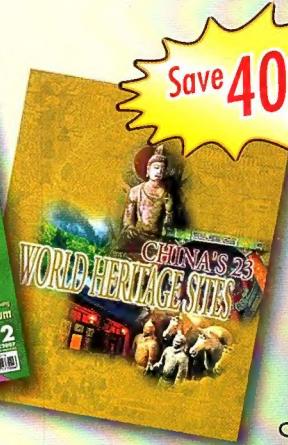
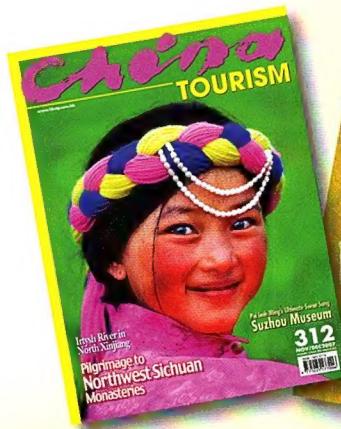


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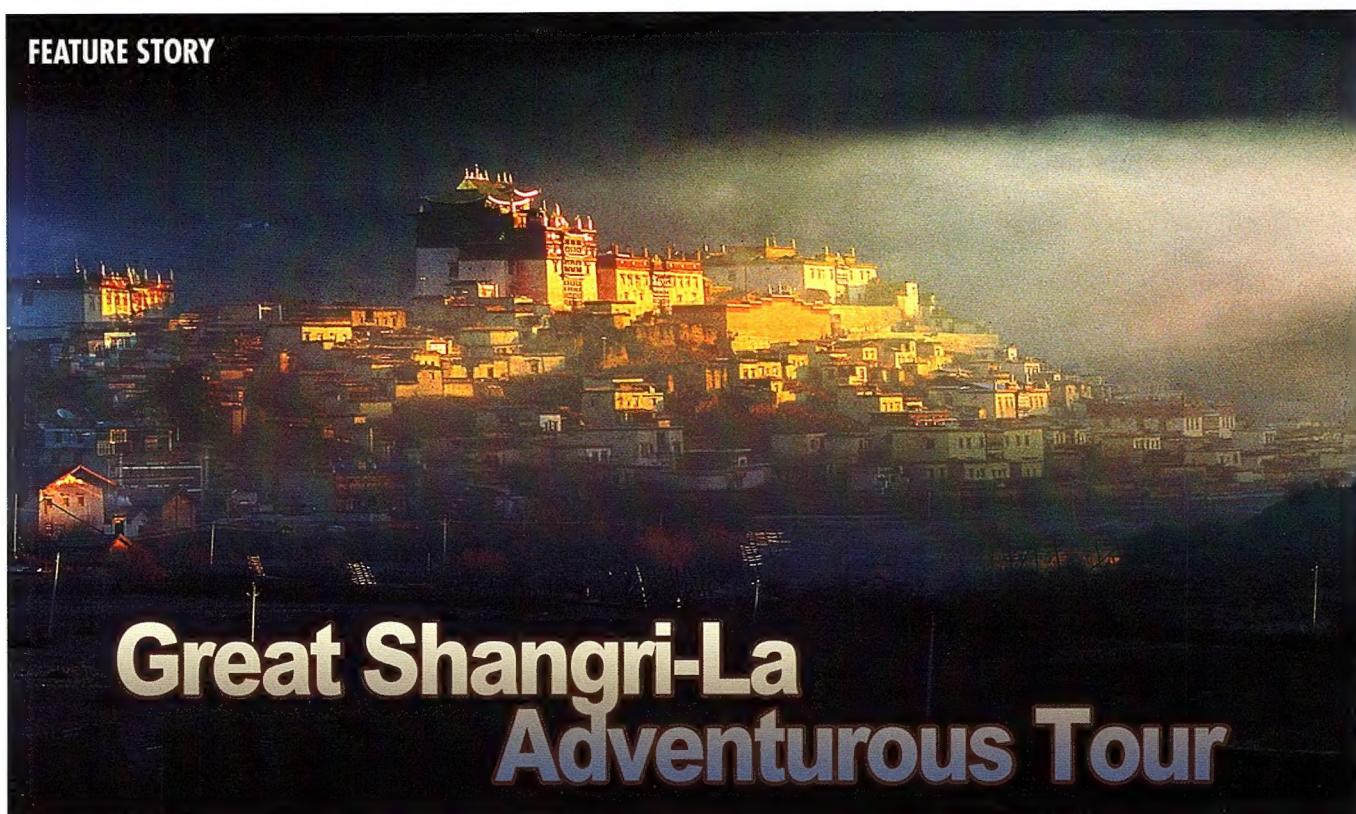
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**FEATURE STORY**



# Great Shangri-La Adventurous Tour

Shangri-La, a fictional place described in *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton in 1933, is an earthly paradise. This place is also called the Himalayan Utopia — with pyramidal snow-capped mountains, immeasurable deep gorge, majestic lama monasteries, congregated villages like building blocks, and a pluralistic centre

of various nationalities and religions.

Once there is the term of 'Shangri-La', every county started claiming they are the real Shangri-La. Therefore, I brought the novel with me, and headed for Zhongdian in Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan Province.



## Olympics Countdown Folk Sports in China

The Beijing Olympics will be the biggest-ever tournament in China, attracting over-the-globe's attention. In retrospect, Chinese people are still playing those amazing folk sports thousands of years ago. Wrestling, throwing, ball games, water games, swing... all these kind of folk activities come from rural villages, as well as traditional festivals, celebrations, assemblies and even novels.

## On the Way While the Great Wall meets the Yellow River

Both the Great Wall and Yellow River are crucial symbols of China. The two oriental dragons meet on the grand canyon of Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces. There is a place with age-old history, traditional customs and gorgeous landscapes.



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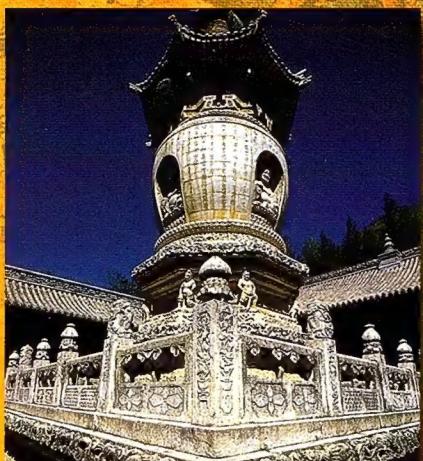
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2008

山西五台山為中國四大佛教名山之一，  
與四川峨眉山、浙江普陀山、安徽九華山齊名，  
相傳為文殊菩薩說法的道場。

# 佛教 五 台 名 山



## Mount Wutai, Shanxi Scared Mountain of the Buddhists

Mount Wutai, located in Shanxi Province, is one of the four scared mountains of China. Ranking the same as the three other mountains — Mount E'mei in Sichuan Province, Mount Putuo in Zhejiang Province and Mount Juhua in Anhui Province, Mount Wutai is a popular pilgrimage destination for Buddhists. It is highly regarded as the domain of the Bodhisattva Manjushri, an emanation of wisdom.



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